

THE MAGAZINE OF CINEMA & TELEVISION FANTASY №48 75p

# STARBURST

TM

**SPECIAL  
ISSUE!**

**ZOMBIES  
OF THE  
SCREEN**


WE INTERVIEW THE  
DIRECTORS OF  
LIVING DEAD MOVIES  
**GEORGE ROMERO**  
**LUCIO FULCI**  
**JEAN ROLLIN**

RETROSPECTIVE LOOKS AT

**NIGHT OF THE  
LIVING DEAD**  
**LIVING DEAD  
AT THE  
MANCHESTER  
MORGE**

**PLUS**  
**ZOMBIES ON TV**  
**HISTORY OF ZOMBIES  
IN THE MOVIES**





## GEORGE ROMERO

AS PART OF OUR EXTENSIVE COVERAGE THIS MONTH ON THE HISTORY OF THE MOVIES WE INTRODUCED GEORGE ROMERO, THE MAN WHO WAS PROBABLY SINGLE-HANDEDLY RESPONSIBLE FOR CHANGING THE FACE OF THE UNDEAD IN THE CINEMA AND FOR SPARKING A WHOLE SUB-CULTURE. SEE PAGE 24.



## HISTORY OF ZOMBIE MOVIES

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# STARBURST LETTERS

## A NOTE FROM ADRIC

**Starburst 45** was great, but... Peter J. Hardy takes note: while you are entitled to have opinions about Adric, who you know, you are not entitled to have opinions about Matthew Waterhouse, who you do not know. If you can't differentiate between fiction and fact, I suggest you see a psychiatrist.

Oh, and if you are going to write letters about me, please spell my name right!

Matthew Waterhouse,  
BBC Television

## IT'S THE GRAEME BASSETT SHOW...

The cover of **Starburst 45** was, in theory, well suited to an Easter issue, but in practice rather drab, especially when compared to the oil painting which illustrated the same scene in an early *Savage Sword of Conan*. Poor old Arnold! When you look bored being crucified, you've certainly got problems.

Although not a *Star Wars* fan, I found the feature on the various generations of poster absolutely fascinating. The Creature and the Castle articles were also worth reading.

Finally, I notice in your publicity job for *Metropolis*—The Future Truth, you neglect to mention the prison term served by producer Clive Patel when he was found guilty of infringing the copyright of H.R.F. Keating's *Inspector Ghote* novels in the tv series *Bombay 6-P*. I hope Britain's favourite fantasy journal hasn't fallen foul of unscrupulous fellows.

Graeme Bassett,  
Grimsby.

## LOSS OF COLOUR

I was saddened to see the removal of eight colour pages from your magazine.

Over the last eleven months the appearance of the magazine has been one of outstanding quality, with some superb colour stills reflecting the high standards of present day cinema.

An explanation of some kind would have been nice—something other than the rising costs of printing necessitating the reduction in the colour content or the raising of the magazine's price. I'm sure the readers would have preferred a price increase rather than a decrease in quality.

Stuart Groom,  
Maidstone,  
Kent.

What can we tell you, Stuart, that you would want to hear? The only reason for cutting the colour pages out was to reduce costs. As it happens we are having to raise the cover price as well. Certainly we do not take these steps lightly. By doing both in this case we avoided cutting the colour altogether or increasing the cover price to such an extent that it would go over the pound mark. That's the truth. We can't tell you anything else. Now, if every reader of **Starburst** were to buy two copies instead of one, the problem would never have arisen in the first place...

## TV MERCHANDISING

I enjoyed the June edition of the magazine, in particular Richard Hollis's article on TV merchandising. One avenue of merchandising which he neglected to go into and which doesn't seem to be looked at much in print is those "goodies" which came out of breakfast cereal packets. Who amongst us can forget, as youngsters, the disgusting feeling of their favourite breakfast food as it slid through their fingers whilst they strained every muscle in their arm struggling to rescue the badge, transfer...?

My memory on the actual gifts that have been given away over the years is vague and I hope someone will be able to give a full account of them. I remember however that it was "Sugar Smacks" in the late sixties which promoted tv science-fiction fantasy hardest. For instance I

remember just after the first few *Star Trek*'s were broadcast by the BBC going into the local Tesco's and seeing, instead of Noddy and some other nursery favourite staring from the front of "Sugar Smacks", Mr Spock instead. Each packet gave away a free badge. The full set was made up of Kirk, Spock, McCoy, Sulu and the Enterprise symbol. I never got Kirk but amassed quite a few McCoy's. All are now sadly lost. *Star Trek*'s position on the front of the cereal packet was quickly replaced by the various characters from the Garry Anderson stable. A crew member from a *Thunderbirds*, *Captain Scarlet* and *Joe 90* all took their turn in staring into a bowl of "Smacks" from the front of the cereal. Obviously these promotions came in to push viewing figures of the shows up as each premiered, as well as pushing "Smack" sales up. I can't remember most of the gifts that were given with the Anderson crew but seem to recall that when



*Joe 90* graced the cover a W.I.N. membership card lay between the cereal and the box. After the Anderson stable had their chance to stare at us over the breakfast table my already faulty memory completely gives way although I can dimly recall that Jon Pertwee's *Doctor Who* took the front of "Sugar Smacks". After that the nursery struck back and Noddy and Hector from *Hector's House* took various turns at the helm of "Sugar Smacks". I believe that it wasn't until Tom Baker's *Doctor Who* appeared on "Waatabox" giving away *Who* monster cards inside it and a coded message from UNIT on the outside that science-fiction from tv returned to the halls of the cereals.

As must be obvious my memory on this matter is very inadequate but as I remember very dimly all manner of free "goodies" from the cereal freebies to packets of biscuits giving away *Magic Roundabout* figures (I got a Brian the

Snail). I would welcome further information on the subject (might make a good book).

I can't wait for the remake of *Metropolis*, my favourite film next to *GIDGET: Teenage Werewolf*.

Sasha Simic,  
High Wycombe,  
Bucks.

An hour ago I picked up **Starburst 43** from my local newsagency, now I stand atop a chair with a noose around my neck ready to end it all. You're probably standing there wondering what this magnificent magazine could do to cause the death of one of its greatest fans, but rest assured the problem lies with the article and letters you ran on page 12 concerning the much worshipped (yes, we've got our own fanclub and everything) *Blade's 7*.

Here in Australia (we're the ones down under, remember) we are a hell of a long way behind you in the series, so far behind in fact that we

Please send all comments and criticisms to:  
Starburst Letters, Starburst Magazine,  
Marvel Comics Ltd, Jadwin House,  
205-211 Kentish Town Road,  
London, NW5, United Kingdom.



recently only saw the apparent disappearance from the series of Blake and Jenna and the appearance of Dayna Mellanby and Del Tarrant.

Now in your magazine I here murmurs of the end of the series-

completely, can this be true? The crew of the Liberator have become a day-to-day part of life around this household, the exodus to the television on Saturday nights (the timeslot given the series) is rivalled only by that mentioned in the Bible.

I ask you, I plead with you, to inform me of what has happened over there in England. Has all but Avon been killed? What is this talk of Blake's death at the hands of Avon? You cannot possibly comprehend the pain and fear I feel

knowing that such a great part of my life may have been finished in such an unfeeling way.

Alan Driver,  
Victoria,  
Australia.

## FLICKERS BY TIM QUINN & DICKY HOWETT



# THINGS TO COME

## SUPERGIRL FLIES IN

With Christopher Reeve's contract (and enthusiasm) running out of steam with *Superman III*, producer Alexander and the Sekind have found a way to continue their super high-flying series (or perhaps a further three years of Zoran Pencil magic).

They're giving birth to *Supergirl*. The *Dark Crystal* cocreator David Odell has delivered his script and Timothy Burtin (Tee) is due to produce the first of the potential series before the end of the year. Making use, no doubt, of some of the *Supa III* sets at Pinewood.

The third (and last?) Reeve outing as *Supie* will be directed by ill's Richard Lester over 18 weeks in likely stardust at Pinewood and in Canada this summer. As reported here already Richard Pryor—currently the box-office king of America—is joining super-Chris and Daily Planet regulars, Jack-a-Cooper and Marc McClure.

As of April, however, Chris had still not been shown the new script—by Daniel and Leslie Newman. And certain areas of his contract were said to be 'grey'.

The hunt for a *Supergirl* is expected to be launched any day now. It won't be a star name, but a complete newcomer, like Steve in 1977. One thing is sure, she won't be Margot Kidder. Although contrary to all previous reports, ripples, rumours, statements and court suits, Margot is expected to return as Lois Lane in the provisionally titled *Superman III*. One of Margot's films since is Pryor's new hit *Some Kind of Hero*.

And as you probably know, both I and II have been bought in a Superpackage by ITV for not so much a song as a complete opera. Eight million bucks for the two. That's for a total of four screenings over the next seven years. But—taugh luck, ITV—not until after Christmas this year.

## SEAN'S BACK AS 007!

Now hear this... Sean Connery is coming back as James Bond! Only reason a contract hasn't been drawn up, signed and sealed as I write this, is a matter of—what else?—money. Once his salary (and inevitable percentage-cut) has been finalised, Sean's return to Bondage for the 007th time will be official. For one film only.

In fact, it is somewhat difficult trying to write this in a hot news story for a magazine with a protracted printing schedule. The story has been chugging day by day. And, by the time you read this, you may well be shrugging your collective shoulder-holders and sniggering because you could have heard it all on radio and TV, or read it alongside your Page Three (and possible 007) pin-up.

But, as of now here and now, the first non-Cubby Broccoli Bond film for 15 years... is ON! And Sean will be playing 007... for *The Empire Strikes Back* director, Irvin Kershner, no less!

Naturally this is terrific news for all

## DAWN OF TWILIGHT

Hottest news out of Hollywood has to be that John Landis, Joe Dante and John Carpenter are joining forces to make a movie together. A similar project was in the works a few years ago, but that was to be a Carpenter/Dante/Cronenberg collaboration. The new picture is unlikely to have much in common with that un-made movie which was to be scripted by Cronenberg. *The Twilight Zone* (yes, based on the Rod Sterling series of the 60s) is being written by master scribe Richard Matheson whose credits for television and movies, never mind books, would take an entire issue of *Starburst* to list.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of *The Twilight Zone* is that the film is being rushed through production and should be in theatres for Christmas, in America, at least. All three directors are noted for their abilities for fast, economic shooting without detracting from the finished product.

With advance word on *Crescendo* looking good, perhaps the anthology fright feature is ready for a comeback. Milton Subotsky, where are you?

Phil Edwards

Connery—Bond fans. It's not so good for the non-fans of Roger Moore's Bond. Because he, obviously, won't be quit-

ting the series just yet while Cubby Broccoli is too canny a producer to risk a new Bond when Connery is his rival in the cinema.

So Cubby has little alternative but to pay Moore enough to make one more Bond, *Octopussy*, at least one more.

The behind-the-scenes facts about the surprise development are these:

Hollywood producer Jack Schwartzman will be making, in effect, a re-tread of *Thunderball*, Sean Connery's fourth Bond hit, circa 1965.

The new script, however, is not the original re-make idea, *Warhead*, written by Len Deighton and Connery at the behest of producer Kevin McClory, one of the three producers of *Thunderball*, and due to a court action against author Ian Fleming, the sole owner of the *Thunderball* and re-make rights (and indeed what's loosely referred to as 'other Bond material').

McClory, a smooth, urbane Irishman, has been trying to get *Warhead* into production since 1976. This year, he gave up.

He sold all his rights in the matter—to James Bond, that is—to Jack Schwartzman, formerly connected with Lerner, makers of *Dolmen*. He also produced Peter Sellers' best movie, *Being There*. Jack's choice of director is Irvin Kershner. So just how Kershner can fit the Bond film into his already crowded schedule since he being born again with *The Empire Strikes Back*, I'm not sure. Presumably one or two of Kershner's scheduled films have struck the rocks... otherwise, I can foresee that Irvin will be the first to withdraw from the

proposed 007 vehicle. (What's an American doing planning to direct Britain's top hero, anyway?)

The not-so-hot news is that 007 scenario is being penned by a certain Lorenzo Semple, Jr. Semple is not simple. But he did write the *Batman* movie and, for the unspeakable Dino De Laurentiis, he turned out the *King Kong* and *Flash Gordon* re-hashes. Semple, however, does have at least one solid credit in his portfolio. He scripted Robert Redford's *Three Days of the Condor* (1975), which was okay. It was also about... espionage.

As mentioned last time, ex-actor Mark Daman and his company, Producer Sales Organisation, has been spreading the word about the proposed Connery—Bond comeback among his global customers for some months. At the recent American Film Market, Daman's sales pitch resulted in more than words and knowing smiles. Certain overseas distributors slipped money on the table to secure release rights to the unmade movie. So Jack Schwartzman even has the beginnings of a budget already! And that's likely to be heavily increased once Connery's signing is official and Marc Daman flies the Connery Back flag at the Cannes film festival.

To be continued, I feel sure...

## COMMERCIAL STARS

One country that could put up a lot of loot for the Connery Bond would be Japan. The Japanese are crazy about Sean and Roger Moore. The two pals (together in Hollywood last month to celebrate Cubby Broccoli's Oscar) are



First View. First stills from the new *Conan* movie—*Forbidden World*. Movie is set on the planet Zorbia where a genetic research team seeking to produce, rather than find, a new food to save the galaxy from starvation. The man gets a little out of hand when they create a monstrous mutant instead...

# Compiled by Tony Crawley

both making as much as a million dollars each for appearing in Japanese TV commercials: In neither case, do they have to come on strong as a salesman. All they have to do is appear with a product, to guarantee it's success. Moore pushes cars; Connery, tires!

They're not the only stars making a mint from the Tokyo tube. Big names like Newman, Dunaway and Woody Allen also make ads for Japan. And I've heard that Tony Perkins is pining the commercials business. For a new cologne.

Can't you just see it... There's Perkins, all hot and sweaty after throttling another blonde in the shower, cleaning up the horrible mess in the bathroom, bundling the body in a car boot, driving it into the lake and running back to Momma. Cull Close-up. What a fellow needs after a work-load like this is "Psycho Cologne." It reaches the parts you didn't know the blood has splattered...

## MILIUS PLUS KUBRICK!

It's on the cards that John Milius will stick around for the *Conan* sequel. But he wasn't joking when he said his might never direct again. All he wants to do is sit back and write the occasional script for interested parties. He's found one already. Milius is currently burning the old midnight vino in penning the next movie of... Stanley Kubrick.

Subject? Ah, yes, well, that's one secret not even my international informers—or myself—have managed to

come up with. Yet. Watch this space.

## SPIELBERG PLUS DE PALMA

And another surprise teaming... Having had his career rescued by good pal Lucas after 1941, Steven Spielberg is apparently trying to lift pal Brian De Palma into the superhelmer class. (He'll have a job). The two directors have been chewing around a combination of Steve producing and Brian directing a movie called *Congo*. So big that Paramount and Fox were having to share budget and release. Too big. It transpires. *Congo* has been longed. Now the guys are mulling over an off-project... *Star Wars*.

While the "Spielma" discussions go on, De Palma has selected *Aot of Vengeance* as his next thriller for his usual producer George Litto.

## STAR TREK: THE TITLE

So, not all the uniforms are new! Forget last month's report about the official new title for the second Trekkie movie. It doesn't exist anymore. (The title that is) So strike, *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* (which had already replaced *The Undiscovered Country*) and will you welcome, please... *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*.

The reason for this change of hats is the wrath of George Lucas. Well, maybe not quite wrath; but concern. He felt that Jedi's nose was being put out of joint by the similarity between *The Wrath of Khan* and *Revenge of the Titans*. Silly really. As if anyone out there could muddle a *Star Wars* film with a *Star Trek* film. Particularly as the new *Trek* opened in America in June and as we all know, impatient as we are, Jedi doesn't reach this gate until May next year. (Besides, *Star Wars* movie have people and *Star Trek* movies star cardboard, wigs, face-lits and cast-off models from Madame Tussauds, right).

But George and his Lucas film, being who and what they be, particularly as far as Paramount are concerned after the huge *Reidens* success, their concern was very quickly alleviated. Paramount changed titles in mid-stream (and advertising campaigning) without so much as a yelp. Yes, Mr Lucas, wherever you say Mr Lucas, what would you like to call it, Mr Lucas... oh anything you want Mr Lucas... would *The Bed News Bears Go To The Moon* be okay, Mr Lucas...

"There was nothing 'legal' in our conversations," said one top Paramount executive. "Since it seemed to make them uncomfortable, and since we had the ability to change our title without much bother, we just did it."

Hell, I wouldn't have been surprised if they'd agreed to cancel *Trek* altogether is that what George asked for. *Reidens* was the money-maker of last year, after all, and started its re-release in the American summer... even though some cinemas over there haven't finished playing its first run yet.

## STAR TREK: THE CONTINUATION

To make sure they don't upset George next time around, Paramount has already issued the title of *Star Trek III: It will be... pause for suitable fanfare... le Sarcophagus of Spock*. Which rather takes care of all the suggestions from the publicity teams, not forgetting veiled hints from director Nicholas Meyer, that Big Ears is knocked off in II, wouldn't you say?

## HALLOWEEN III

Well, let's get this title straight as well. It's going to be: *Halloween III: Season of the Witch*. And that's exactly as it sounds. A whole new approach to the series, scripted by our *Guatemala* man, Nigel Kneave, without any relation to the other two films (So why call it III at all, I ask myself. Answer, because Dino De Laurentiis is concerned with it).

"We hope," says co-producer Debra Hill, "to prove that it is still possible to make a truly scary film without the bloodletting of all the films which imitated John Carpenter's original 1978 *Halloween*."

Debra feels Kneave's scenario is more in line with *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. John Carpenter, naturally, is the other co-producer. He's also supplying the film's score.

Direction he's leaving (?) to his old mate, Tommy Lee Wallace, his art man on *Dark Star*, *Assault on Precinct 13*, *Halloween* and *The Fog*. Tommy was supposed to have been the director on *Halloween II*, that was John's plan, anyway. It didn't come off. (Neither did the film). Tommy has had a hand in some of John's scripts before now, as well, including his long delayed EMI Western, *El Diable*, and Tom's first solo scripting job is Dino de Laurentiis' *Amityville: The Possession*.

The third *Halloween*, if such it can truly be called, started shooting at a place called Eureka, in California, on April 19, with Tom Atkins, Stacy Nelkin and veteran Dan O'Herlihy. It's due for release by Carpenter's current home studio, Universal.

Meanwhile, the very off-centre director of *Halloween II*, Rick Rosenthal, was another chance—and from Carpenter's next employers, our own EMI. Rick is directing *Bad Boys*, described as an unflinching look at today's prevalence of teenage violence. Rick's star is Sean Penn, who was Tim Hutton's buddy in *Taps*, and the film's produced by Robert Solo, who did the same for Ken Russell's little thing called... *The Devils*.

## CARPENTER II

Other news from the Carpenter shop. Apart from the *El Diable* Western (which will, yes, but of course, star John's Eastwood, Kurt Russell), John Carpenter has been confirmed by Uni-

versal as the director of the movie or Stephen King's *Firestarter* book...

John's wife, Adrienne Barbeau, has beaten him to the punch. She's one of George Romero's stars in his Stephen King film *Creepshow*. Adrienne plays a real bitch of a wife in *The Cate* story. Her husband? Hell Holbrook, from *The Fog*, where else?

## PSYCHO II

Don't like to boast, but looks like I was right... Universal Pictures have decided the only way to stop a proposed *Psycho* rip-off sequel is make the damned thing itself. And there it is, quietly announced in the company's new 125-million-dollar schedule of ten 1982 films: *Psycho II*.

It was *Cinefantastique* magazine which first revealed that an outfit, name of The Picture Striking Company, were planning its own *Psycho II* affair: *The Return of Norman*. Universal has since been in touch with the American magazine, pointing out that (a) Universal alone own all rights to the Hitchcock classic and (b) had made no deal with The Picture Striking Co. Legal counsel Sheldon M. Matlen's letter also urged and cautioned any potential investors or distributors of such a rip to think twice before infringing Universal's rights... or, no doubt, they send an SAS task force after 'em!

The word now from Universal's Black Tower is that Anthony Perkins might be in their sequel (is real return of Norman Bates). It's one of four movies the studio is making with Dek Communications, which means it's an accom for Dek's On-TV television station. That also explains, perhaps, the low budget—just four million dollars. (Sense as for, oh no, *Snokey* and *The Benefit III*—minus big Burt at that price, that's for sure).

And so The Picture Striking Co. has struck out. But at least its chiefs, writer-producers Gary Travis and Michael Jensen, have got their way. A *Psycho* sequel is happening. Next time they think of a movie they'd like to sequelise, maybe they should talk to the owner's first and they might even end up with a pulke deal to shoot the thing themselves. Not that there is many classics left untamed just lately. If you think of any, send 'em on a postcard to Travis and Jensen. Not to me. I loathe sequels almost as much as I detest remarks... which after all is Dino de Laurentiis' names for sequel.

## BOOK II

New from the cinema books are catching the movie's habits. Dunell C. Willis has updated his 1972 book about our genre and so it's called *Horror And Science Fiction Films II* (published in America by Scarecrow Press, at \$28.50). The previous volume, it's useful as a loose, rather than definitive, guide: Willis just loathes Hammer films, for instance, he has all the genre items from the last ten years in it, at least, and several that I'm sure never got beyond the drawing





**Gotche!** Better late than never, because, hell, it's never happened to our genre before. It happened on March 28, and pressure of space prevented use until now of this glorious shot of the first ever recipient of an Oscar for special makeup effects. And the winner was... why Rick Baker, of course. Winning work? *As America Wentz* in London. Rick's next assignment (if it happens in spite of the legal trouble) puts him back in his favourite field. He's making gorillas for the definitive Tarzan movie, *Greystoke*, to be directed by Hugh Hudson, the *Cherubs* of First man.

board. (Film and tv company advertising is interesting, but the films advertised are not always made.) Unfortunately for Donald Willis, his friend, Walt Lee, produced a much better volume around the time of Willis' first book. Judging by his writing, not to mention his layout, Willis knows he can't really hope to catch up with Walt Lee's *Reference Guide to Fantastic Films*.

## BRAINSTORMING

The legal hassles over Doug Trumbull's *Brainstorm* have not, alas, been resolved after all. A month or so back, things looked good. Despite the tragic death of Natalie Wood, Trumbull said he could finish the movie, that Natalie's final couple of scenes were "rather minor", and could be transferred to other characters in a hotel and laboratory set-up. Lloyds of London, the film's insurers, appeared to be paying for the completion of shooting, interrupted by the actress' drowning. And MGM said it reserved the right to release the film, or not, after viewing Trumbull's work-print. If MGM didn't like it, the film would revert to Lloyds and they could turn distributor overnight, or sell the film to any interested company in short, all seemed well. Not any more, friends.

Oog Trumbull finished shooting and arranged a screening of the rough-cut the other week. The MGM brass turned up, took their seats and waited for the lights to dim. Trumbull got up and read out a list of 25 missing scenes. The brass beamed, stalked out of the screening room, into the projection suite, grabbed the movie and took it off and locked it in a vault, apparently to make sure no other company

could see it.

MGM then accused Lloyds of skimping on the money for Trumbull to complete not only the main shooting—but the special effects as well. (The missing 25 scenes were all effects shots.) Lloyds said their agreement after Natalie Wood's death was to pay for the rest of the filming (which cost 2.7 million out of the 3-million the Lloyds has promised). It had nothing to do with effects shooting, which surely had been part and parcel of the original MGM budget and was not hampered by the close-down of production following Natalie's demise.

Poor Doug Trumbull remains stuck in the middle. All he (still) wants to do is finish the film. And get it out on screens. He thinks it's good. All he needs is the special effects! But MGM say, that's nothing to do with us. Lloyds say, that's nothing to do with us, either. Stalemate! One thing is very clear: MGM is very wary indeed of releasing a movie with a dead star in it—and cites a history of such jinxed movies. The company also feels that certain scenes the actress still had to shoot are crucial to the film's plot. Trumbull, and Lloyds, do not.

I understand that MGM is making one last attempt to iron out the problem with Lloyds. Both sides refuse to budge from the letter of their agreements. MGM insist that Lloyds has to finance the effects. Lloyds say no, MGM has to pay for the effects, that their insurance cover extended to principal photography with the stars only.

Meanwhile, we're missing a movie that surely has some magic to it, as it's Trumbull's first directorial outing since 1972's *Silent Running*. While dashing between one company and the other, pleading for the effects go-ahead, Trumbull has revealed that Natalie Wood's

last scene in the film was, in fact, leashed "in it's totality" some weeks before she died. So what's the bee?

## ALDISS AND SF, TOO!

Belated congratulations to Radio Four's Frank Delaney of *The Book Programme* (and the Beeb's new Parkinson) for a riveting half-hour devoted entirely to science fiction. The main feature was a long interview about the genre with... who else but the author of *The History of Science Fiction*: Brian Aldiss. "Science fiction," he said, "is hot and cold running imagination." He cited Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* as the start of it all, nominated H.G. Wells as the Shakespeare of it, and apologised for forgetting the names of *Saperemee's* creators (Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster) "which should be engraved on my arm or my heart".

Other writers he praised were John Wyndham for *Day of the Triffids* (with a lovely anecdote about how Wyndham heard two men discussing their garden and one suggesting he had a triffid growing in his, which is how and when Wyndham realised he had put a new word into the language); and Henry Hearn for "proving it is not all doom and gloom". Jules Verne, he wasn't too sure about.

The programme was well-edited with adroit readings by John Glover—including an impassioned speech from *Frankenstein's* monster—and a wonderfully nostalgic excerpt from Charles Chilton's *Journey into Space* radio series with Andrew Faulds MP as Jet Morgan. Plus a slice of Chris Reeve and Mergat Kidder hiding around in *Superman II*.

Surprisingly, the sound quality of the

movie clip was the worst, quality wise. Otherwise a very good show. Worth repeating, *Anty Monthly Like* all good of magazine.

## BATTLETRUCK LIFT OFF

Congratulations to our mate Harley Cockles! He's garnered excellent American trade reviews for his Roger Cormae release, *Battletruck*—made down under last year. "Working on a limited budget in New Zealand," runs the *Variety* notice, "Cockles not only struts up a lot of action, but gets more performing subtleties from his characters than these films usually have... It's all heism, of course, and the plot and low-budget technical work often gets ragged if not completely ripped. With Cockles, however, New World will probably soon be getting credit for another discovery."

New World should put out Harley's biography in its publicity sheets, though. The *Variety* review refers to *Battletruck* as being Harley's feature debut after his second-unit work on *The Empire Strikes Back*. Whereas Harley Cockles, of course, made his feature debut with two Children's Film Foundation movies in London (including the famous *Glimmerbell*) and *That Summer* (1975).

Harley first got Cormae interested in his *Battletruck* story while shooting interview sessions of BBC-TV's *Area* programme in 1976, in Los Angeles. It was the New Zealand interest which really got the truck moving, though. The Cockles cent includes Michael Beck from *The Warriors* and (silly whinger it is) *Xanadu*, Annie McEnroe from *Mika Conn's The Hand*, James Wainwright as a memorable heavy, and regular from the John Oak-Kevin Connor movies, John Ratzenberger.

## MAD ABOUT MAX

The Americans, who've taken so long to discover Australian cinema, are likewise going bonkers for *Mad Max II*. Or *The Road Warrior* as they call it. *Time's* critic, Richard Corliss, compares Max to John Ford's *The Searchers* and Kurosawa's *Yojimbo* (the base for Eastwood's *Fistful of Dollars*) and praises director George Miller's creation of a milieu "as dense and tangy as Tolkien's Middle Earth or Celine's demimonde... Miller suggests violence; he does not exploit it. He throws the viewer off-balance by mixing the riotous rhythm of his chase scenes with tableaux of *Welpurgsnacht* grandeur..."

They do get carried away sometimes, *Establishment* critics when they find, to their surprise, they love a genre movie. I hope George Miller will not let all the *Welpurgsnacht* stuff go to his head.

## STEVE AT CANNES

By the time you're reading this, I will have been at the 35th Cannes film festival. Where among other American en-



# THINGS TO COME



tries will be Steven Spielberg's E.T. film. I'm hoping Spielberg will be on hand as well, and that he'll talk about who really directed his production of *Pollanogist* at MGM—himself or the credited helmer, Tobe Hooper. Rumours galore are coming out of the American ether, that Spielberg shot anything between 25%, 75% or all of the film.

Steve has announced he'll make three films this summer and autumn, before even beginning to think too much about the *Reidens* sequel next year. What's more, he vows that all three will be made for five million dollars each, or less. What the films are, he's not saying. Seems he enjoyed making to make E.T. in deepest secrecy, that he wants to do it again. One of the three will be funded by Warner Brothers, that much I know. All three will be otherwise made officially by Steve's companies, Nighttime and Ambler Productions. The second combine is named after his professional debut film, a 24-minute number. It's success at the 1989 Adelaide film festival led to his arrival at Universal.

## ON YER BIKE!

The merchandising on Spielberg's E.T. even knocks the *Star Wars* and *Superman* gimmicks into a cocked hat. Not in numbers (eleven so far) but the range. By the time the movie opened in America in June, fans were able to buy everything from Hershey's Reese's Picos candy and Texas Instruments electronic learning-side (both of which are even featured in the movie) to the usual customised pyjamas, posters, bubblegum, transfers and figurines and ... would you believe, for \$500 dollars, your own, your very own Japanese-designed E.T. bike.

## BLADE CUTS

Main attraction at the seventh of festival in the French township of Metz was something of a teaser promotion for *Blade Runner*. The Ladd Company released its trailer (excellent), a bunch of slides, and a short documentary on the making of the movie. Among those watching with interest: Michael Moorcock, Christopher Foss, Scott Baker, Pierre Pelot (resting after completing his 99th book!) and artist Moebius.

Ridley Scott, I hear, has sped through a re-editing job on his movie. The score, by the way, is from this year's *Cherise* Oscar-winning composer, Vangelis. John Williams can't do everything Harrison Ford makes.

## AH SO LO!

*Star Wars* is being re-issued in Japan. And it will be in Japanese this time—Ah So Lo: First time around it was in English with Japanese sub-titles. The re-run was rushed because the film has lately been sold to television in Tokyo. Price? About eight million dollars. But as it was sold in a batch of ten Fox films (the Lucas film's horror, I'm sure), the Japanese seem to have got a much better bargain than the networks with the hefty *Star Wars* bills in America, Britain and Australia.

## CASTING CALL

*Dragonlayer* Peter MacNicol moves swiftly up-market into *Sophie's Choice*, which should be Meryl Streep's runaway 1983 Oscar winner ... Michael Murphy, ex-Woody Allen sidekick, and a genre guy in Saul Bass' *Phase IV* and New Zealand's *Dead Kids*, joined Mel

Gibson and Sigourney weaver (who needs no introduction from me) in Peter Weir's *The Year of Living Dangerously* ... Zoe Wannemaker was a late addition for *The Hunger*, with Dave Bowie and Cathy Deneuve. Zoe's the talented offspring of Harryhausen's *Sinbad* and *The Eye of the Tiger* director, Sam Wannemaker ... James Bond's last heavy, Julien Christie in *Indie* ... By the way, the next 007 heavy will be a female ... Donald Moffitt, good old Rem from tv's *Laguna's Run*, is in the cast of Phil Kaufman's new movie, *The Night Shift*, based on Tom Wolfe's book about the Apollo astronauts ... And whether you choose to believe this final slice of incidental casting info, or not, in the latest *Filmmaker* chiller, *Hell Train*, is a startling young beauty who answers to the name for she does now) of ... Toffee O'Connell.

the John Irving novel can tell you, makes a new credo in life from the expression: *Beware The Undertoad*. What's next, Robin? Toad of Toad Hall?

## MAIL BOX

No. No. No! That's in answer to a couple of letters after last month's column and my story about Hulk Lou Ferrigno making *Hercules* in *Rome*, while another outfit is making *Hercules* in *New York* in ... New York. No, the New York paper is not a form of re-brand of the 1970 *Hercules* in *New York* movie directed by art Arthur Allen Seidelman. Gled you brought it up though. Because that one starred a fellow billed as Arnold Strong instantly recognisable, despite all the body-changing (30 lbs down!) exercise he did for *Conan*, as Arnold Schwarzenegger

## POPEYED FROG

Ork's Robin Williams is due on the box soon in the title role of the Grimm Brother's fairy tale, *The Frog Prince*. Eric Idle, of the Pythons, is writing and directing the snow for a new cabaret series being produced by Williams' *Popeye* co-star, Shelley Duvall. Before turning frog, Robin Williams completed *The World According To Garp* which, as all fans of

## LAST WORD

I can't go this month without letting you know about the newest arrival on the scene. Title: *Misuses Till Midnight*. Writer: Robert Ward. Co-writer: Daniel Lang. Story: Scientist discovers the ultimate power of cosmic energy (it says here) Stars: Evelyn Lear, Thomas Stewart.

You've never heard of them, you say? I'm not surprised. It's a brand new and all-American ... *opera!*

# SCI-FI

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# NIGHTMARES IN A DAMAGED BRAIN

*Review by Alan Jones*

And the drege of the down market stalk and slash brigade keep filtering on... Plain old **Nightmare**, which is the title you'll find this playing under elsewhere, just doesn't sound as good as the promise of **Nightmares in a Damaged Brain**. But a rose is a rose, etc, and this is a place of junk whichever way you look at it. The only point of interest occurs with the opening credit of "Special Make-up Effects director, Tom Savini", but according to him this isn't the case as he was employed only in a consultancy capacity. Director Romano Scavolini betrays his hardcore pornographic roots with lots of extraneous nudity, harshly-lit interiors and intentional longeurs to pad out the pathetically tenuous plot and meagre running time. All this might be acceptable in the hardcore area of filmmaking where the punters only really want to see the sexual activity anyway, but in his transition to the horror field, Scavolini uses the same sort of logic which just doesn't apply at all. Even gore fans want a slight resemblance to a plot somewhere along the line to be able to put the bloodletting into some perspective. The gore scenes on show here aren't that particularly good anyway—the appliances are too fake and the blood too red—and the film is flashed out with a rather tedious flashback. This flashback shows George Tatum (Baird Stafford), as a young boy exiling his father to death and decapitating the girl he is caught indulging in sado-masochism with. Years later, even though he has been treated with anti-psychotic drugs, he still has seizures, with this patricide at the root cause. These seizures make him want to kill again and inexplicably a doctor arranges his release so that he is actually able to. He homes in on a Daytona Beach family with a rather objectionable young boy called C.J. (C.J. Cooke), who is prone to play practical jokes. The latter point is a good instance of how much mileage Scavolini gets out of feeble plot details, and anybody with the slightest intelligence will see through this tired device. There are vague attempts at lessening the incomprehensibility of the storyline by using various chapter headings like "The First Day", but the disjointedness still persists. When they reach the title "The Final Day" you could be forgiven for thinking you've sat through **The Longest Day** already!

The air of secrecy about what we were actually going to see surrounding the press show I attended and the subsequent handing out of vomit bags, still prove that at least showmanship is alive and well in the industry today. But what a shame it had to be wasted on such worthless trash. If you go and see this, you only have yourselves to blame ●





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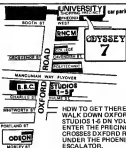
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### ODYSSEY 7.

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One of Italian director Lucio Fulci's best skills is making the near ludicrous entertaining, perfectly palatable and almost endearing. Here at last, thanks to Eagle Films who are championing Fulci's work, is the missing film between *Zombie Flesh Eaters* and *The Black Cat*. While not totally vintage Fulci—I still think the soon to be released *The House by the Cemetery* is his best—there is still that undeniable potency that make his films so watchable. I've now seen *City of the Living Dead*, also known as *La Paura* and *Frayeurs* (*The Fear*) three times and wasn't bored for a moment on each occasion and that is surely what popular cinema is all about.

It is the most eclectic of Fulci's films as ideas from many sources collide head on, which in retrospect, individually, come to fruition in his later works. Ersetz Edgar Allen Poe, H.P. Lovecraft, the *Witches of Salem*, Fulci's favoured zombies and his usual proclivity towards some ancient tome, here the *Book of Enoch*, all jostle one another to keep our rapt attention.

In the town of Dunwich, Massachusetts, Father Thomas commits suicide in a cemetery and as a result of this act opens the gates of Hell and allows those once burnt at the stake to seek a horrible revenge on their ancestors. These events have been witnessed in a seance being held in New York by a medium, Mary (Katherine MacColl), who goes into a trance and dies. Bell (Christopher George), a journalist, is sent to investigate this uncommon death and finds Mary has in reality been buried alive. He saves her and she tells him everything about her vision of a City of the Dead and together they set off to try and find its location. Meanwhile, in Dunwich, mysterious things are happening and the recently dead are seen roaming the streets. As All Saints Day approaches, Mary and Bell race against time to try and find Father Thomas to tear his heart out and put an end to the evil unleashed.

I'm still not quite sure about the twist ending but perhaps it provided the impetus to expand the idea to form *The Beyond*.

Feature by Alan Jones

# CITY OF THE LIVING DEAD





Fulci's roving camera is helped enormously by Sergio Selvati's revising photography and combined they manage to keep interest at a high level. Otherwise, I think the story would have been given the short shrift it really deserves. If any further proof be needed that Fulci is the only director at the moment to be successfully working in the Gothique area, there are two particular scenes on show here. The first and easily one of the most nightmarishly well-crafted images created in the film is Katharine MacColl's escape from her coffin. As she suffocates and cries at the casket lining, Christopher George hacks open the lid with a pick-axe which narrowly misses her face with each repeated blow. Another beautiful touch here is the rose that is seen slowly disintegrating in her hands. Then there is the journey to find Father Thomas that starts as they climb through his tombstone. Shadowy, claustrophobic atmosphere full of menace is at the crux of this, and there is no doubt in my mind that Fulci is a master of such manipulation. It really does annoy me when dissenters call him a hack, because in each of the recent films he has made, there are so many individual worthwhile merits. At this stage in the game this talent cannot be called merely accidental.

Incidentally, instant gut reaction shocks are not ignored for the sake of all this redolent atmosphere, gore fans please take note. Surprisingly, and a pleasant one at that, the censor has not scissored the moment where one of the priest's victims vomits the sum total of her inner organs. Unsurprisingly, he has trimmed the one where a power drill bores through a cranium. All the brains being ripped out and the maggot storm remain intact, you'll be pleased to hear.

Put in perspective—if you've seen *Zombie Flesheaters* and liked it, you'll like this. It shares the same score composer, Fabio Frizzi, too. And if you've seen *The Beyond* and liked that, see *City of the Living Dead* for the promise of Gothique sensibility that Fulci delivers in spades with *The House by the Cemetery* ●



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# VIDEO SCENE

by Peter  
Cargill



In recent months the video world has seen the entry of most of the major Hollywood studios and distributors, with only Columbia yet to make their mark in the video field. This has meant that the range of product has widened, including I am pleased to report that in the Science Fiction/Fantasy side of things.

Most of movies are, of course, set in the future and a number set in the past (*Escape From New York* and *Quest For Fire* could be called fairly contemporary examples of these). A few films have however dealt with travelling through time, fairly recently we had old Superman himself, Christopher Reeve, looking *Somewhere In Time* for his love, Jane Seymour. But the man who actually thought up this idea and developed it into a story was H.G. Wells with his novel *The Time Machine*, sedly botched as a film, I am afraid to say.

The other Wells, Orson, first came to fame with his famous broadcast on American radio in 1938 when he pernicked part of the nation with his dramatisation of the story. The story of how this happened was made into a television piece, *The Night That Penicked America* was co-written by Nicholas Meyer and it was he who came up with the lovely idea of mixing the real with the fantasy, and supposing that Wells not only had actually built a time machine but used it to pursue Jack the Ripper through the ages in 1979 in the movie *Time After Time*. Wells, played by Malcolm McDowell not only finds Jack the Ripper, David Warner, but also his love, played by Mary Steenburgen, a bank foreign exchange teller. Paralleling *To Have and To Have Not* where Bogart and Bacall met for the first time and really fell in love during the shooting, McDowell and Steenburgen did much the same thing! Now this interesting mixture of fantasy, love, and terror is available on Warner Home Video and I can recommend it thoroughly.

## Moving Part and Special Effect

The men behind the scenes in the horror and sf movies have been getting due acknowledgement recently for the contributions they have made to these films—you know, where buildings collapse, people take off out of windows and often die in unpleasant ways. A nice little film in this

mould which you might have overlooked and which is now available on video comes from Australia. It's called *Patrick* and could be called a psychic thriller about a young man trapped in a come and is an effective movie which recalls some of those we used to see from Hollywood many years ago. Our own Susan Penhaligon plays the young nurse in a private nursing home who has to look after Patrick and discovers that he is not quite the vegetable all the experts believe him to be. Patrick uses electricity to communicate with the nurse, through an electric typewriter conveniently set up in his room! Our heroine, who is having trouble with her husband, desperately tries to convince him, a boy-friend doctor and the head of the clinic, played in splendid fashion by none other than Robert Helpmann, that Patrick is more alive than they think. Patrick, in fact, starts to interfere with people around him through psychokinesis and it's here that the special effects of Conrad Rothman come into their own without taking over or interfering with the flow of the film.

Rothman is an American special effects expert who has worked on projects ranging from *The Amazing Dobermans* in the cinema to *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman* on television. Here he worked to produce a rubber "electric radiator" which is thrown into a bath to electrocute two people, burning hair; an exploding medicine cabinet (using two air mortars behind, and monofilament fishing line attached to the doors); the doctor being "thrown" out of a room by psychokinetic power (achieved by an overhead trolley, a monorail, supported from above with four bearing riding on a single pipe, and a pulley arrangement to lift the actor) plus assorted bullet hits, explosions.

## Messing With Nature

Back in 1966 John Frankenheimer made that interesting science-fiction movie *Seconds*, which gave ironically Rock Hudson a new lease of life, away from the Doris Day comedies he had become tagged with. I say ironically because of course the story was about an organisation which provided you with a new body, but there were drawbacks, as with anything first-rate there were always "seconds" lying about! Of course things were

liable to go wrong in such an operation just as things go wrong if you start messing about with nature. It was this theme which was taken up with *Prophecy*, which has now appeared on video (CIC Video). In 1979 this was called "The monster movie" as it dealt with the problems that mercury poisoning can have on both nature and man. Robert Foxworth and Talia Shire starred as a couple who, at the request of a friend, travel to Maine in the heart of the timber country to look at what is happening to the local environment. The lumber company wants to chop down more trees, the Indians want to stop them and put about tales of a monster. Foxworth is a doctor specialising in health and pollution. Sadly, the film never seems to know where it wants to go and what it wants to be; a horror story, a monster movie, an ecological tale or what. The characters are lightly sketched in and we feel very little for either Foxworth or his pregnant [yet he doesn't know it, of course] cello-playing wife, Talia Shire. The film is not ideal for video, being very dark much of the time, and hand-held camerawork leaves the viewer confused as to what is happening to whom, most of the time.

The film also gives us too much time to ask questions about the holes in the logic of the plot and the longer it goes on the worse it becomes until a real cop-out ending.

## Escaping From The Future

Finally a mention for a couple of movies just on video which both use the theme of someone trying to escape from an over-controlled future. *THX 1138* (Warners) was George Lucas' remake of his student short on the same theme, only this time as a feature-length film, and with Robert Duvall and Donald Pleasance as stars. Truth to tell, I feel that the story really is too slight to sustain its length. The other movie is *Logan's Run* (MGM) which had Michael York and Jenny Agutter finding that they wanted to live longer than the age of thirty (which we knew from Dudley Moore was a dangerous age anyway) and finding Peter Ustinov where they were expecting Sanctuary. As viewers of the TV screening will know one of the fascinations of this film is seeing Jenny Agutter's dress and underwear change from scene to scene!

# PARASITE

Review by  
Alan Jones

**3-D** is back and Irwin Yablans has got it! Ever since *Halloween*, executive producer Yablans has been searching for other ways of duplicating that film's runaway success. With *Parasite* he's turned to a gimmick that Hollywood seems to have dusted off en masse in a vague effort to whet a jaded

public's appetite. But just as he failed with *Fade to Black* and *Hell Night*, he fails with *Parasite* too. It isn't enough to graft stereovision onto a film with a non-existent plot and hope that nobody will notice as they'll be too agog in wonderment at the three dimensional grue and gore assaulting their eyeballs. That

is the basic underlying problem with *Parasite* as the 3-D shouldn't be the sum total of its entertainment value, just an emphasis. Is it surprising that the two films best remembered from the 1950s 3-D boom are *House of Wax* and *Creature from the Black Lagoon*?

Both contained strong storylines with the back-up of 3-D to heighten them. *Parasite* is just the reverse. It exists totally for its 3-D images and getting through the turgid plot in between is really quite a haul.

It is 1992 and Dr Paul Dean (Robert Glaudini) has created a deadly strain of parasite for use as a biological warfare deterrent. However, agents of the Merchants, the country's governing force, want to use them to depopulate the Suburban work camps. In an ensuing fight, Dean's stomach is penetrated by one of his lethal creatures and a race against time begins to find an antidote.





All this is explained within five minutes via an obscure dream sequence and the rest of the film has the last remaining parasite that Dean is experimenting on, escaping and infecting various members of a local teenage gang.

Outside of a few key engagements,

**Parasite** is going to be shown flat due to the cost of installing the special silvered screen needed to project it properly. If you can, I urge you to see the 3-D print only, or don't bother at all. I dread to think what this dull, unremarkable little film would look like without dimensional enhancement. Thinking about it, it would probably resemble one of the films that director Charles Band produced earlier like **End of the World**, **Laserblast**, **Zoltan**, **Hound of Dracula**, and the much lauded, in some circles, **Tourist Trap**.

One of the classic faults of 3-D rears its head here. I found my eyes straining somewhat due to the editing which meant constant

shifts in the perception of the variable depth of focus. There is also a somewhat awkward disembodied look about some of the set-ups that could be forgiven with the explanation that they are homages to the 50s films that **Parasite** has its roots in. Except here the accent is on the special make-up effects created by the talented, if somewhat tight-budgeted, team of Sam Winston, James Kagel and Lance Anderson. They provided the parasite, loosely based on a tadpole, and the exploding stomachs but otherwise the 3-D is utilised in a typical text book fashion. The parasite leaps at you from darkened containers along with all the other stock 3-D shocks of reaching hands, pointing gun barrels and, in one direct lift from Band's own **Tourist Trap**, a length of hollow steel tubing is driven into the victim's stomach and the blood runs down it and drips in your lap. By far the most effective use of the medium is

contained in Vivian Blaine's death. She plays the faded glamour queen who now runs a poor excuse for a hotel, and without revealing too much we watch the progress of the parasite to directly above her head while she sits at the dressing table. When she looks up to see where the drops of saliva are coming from... Pow!

**Parasite** is the spearhead of the recent revival of 3-D movie production. For now, see **Parasite** if you're that desperate for a nostalgic experience, even though, for my money **Andy Warhol's Frankenstein** is still the most superb example of the medium at its best. Otherwise wait for the impending remake of **Creature from the Black Lagoon** or **Jaws III**, or the best sounding one of the lot to my mind, **Friday the Thirteenth Part III**. Hopefully, unlike **Parasite** with its one dimensional script, they will be truly three dimensional on all counts.



# 3-D TV

For six million viewers in the South of England, May 8th could be the start of something very new. At 7 p.m. the Independent Television Company TVS, will, within its weekly science show, *The Real World* be broadcasting in 3-D. This is a completely new feature for British television. But if response is favourable then it could easily herald a new season of classic horror films, screened in 3-D and shown late at night. But that will depend on the public response to the segments shown on May 8th.

The 3-D picture can only be obtained on a colour set. They will show double monochrome images, tinted red and green at the edges. To make any sense of the picture and gain the 3-D effect the viewer will need a special pair of red and green tinted spectacles. These were distributed via that week's TVS edition of *TV Times*, and so far 525,000 pairs have been distributed.

However, TVS's *The Real World*, presented by Michael Rodd and Sue Jay was already upstaged by their old rivals at the BBC in *Tomorrow's World*. They transmitted a short item on 3-D a few weeks ago. This programme used one of the old 3-D horror movies to illustrate the anaglyph effect first demonstrated in 1896. This 3-D effect was achieved by the superimposition of two slightly differing perspectives. This fools the brain into believing it sees an image with full

depth of field. The anaglyph system projects two of these images onto the screen, one tinted red, the other tinted green. If the viewer wears one spectacle tinted red, and the other green each eye will receive its own image. These two differing images are perceived by the brain as being just an image with a depth of field, hence a 3-D effect.

*The Real World* demonstrated developments by the Philips Corporation in Holland. This was intercut with examples of the effect, like presenter Sue Jay shaking a duster in front of the screen. This little movement has the most unusual effect. It was as if she reached right into the living room to tickle our noses with the duster. It was pointed out that you of course don't need special spectacles—you can make your own using any red and green transparent material like sweet papers.

The most spectacular 3-D segment shown on the programme was the first 3-D showing of film of the Queen's Coronation. Most of the other material came from the Philips' research laboratory in Eindhoven. The twin image was obtained by using a special adaptation of a camera known as the LDK14 on a special mounting.

Critics have complained that this 3-D effect is still not perfect. For a start, the final image is in monochrome and continual viewing can cause headaches to some. But moreover the

anaglyph technique has many problems with ordinary TV transmission. This is because of the limiting size of the bandwidth on a colour television.

The ordinary colour television is a monochrome set which, by scanning the picture line by line, decodes the colour effect. Because of the size of the bandwidth, this information can only be imperfectly decoded. So even if the colours in the spectacles are perfectly matched to the TV tube's phosphors, some of this information for one "effe" can "leak" over to the other. This causes a confusing stereoscopic effect.

Engineers in Holland tried to overcome this problem and have nearly succeeded. But the directors have other problems to contend with. The biggest of these is obtaining the right geometry for each shot. So the prospect of 3-D films, although still good, must first overcome certain problems. One of these is the fact that the 3-D effect only works for a limited depth of field. If the image is too close to the cameras it will separate and if it is too far away, the 3-D effect is negligible. Up till now a compromise must be reached by TV stations. Either they must modify their transmission system to take colour or 3-D pictures and not both. The problems are by no means insurmountable. But TVS, are poised to put 3-D, teething troubles and all, firmly on the viewing map.



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# ZOMBIES ON TV

Feature by Richard Holliss

**I**t should perhaps be pointed out that you would need to be a Zombie yourself to watch most of the programmes that appear daily on the American tv networks, and yet strangely enough zombies themselves have been rather neglected on the small screen. Many fantasy-orientated shows have featured creatures of such diverse anatomical make-up as werewolves, vampires, plant men and aliens from outer space. Most of the latter have cropped up at one time or another on *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, but the closest Irwin Allen ever came to a zombie tale occurred in the episode from *Voyage* entitled *Time Lock* (1967) written by William Welch with guest stars John Crawford and Paul Trinka. In this particular marine saga a strange being from a future time zone attempts, for some inexplicable reason, to add Admiral Nelson, Richard Basehart, to his collection of zombie-like military officers.

Most tv shows have covered aspects of the undead that could loosely be connected with the zombie, but stories that feature these decaying creatures powered by internal machinations are few and far between. In *Kolchak the Night Stalker* for instance, made in 1974 for Universal tv, an episode entitled *The Zombie*, related the story of how key figures in Chicago's underworld are being mysteriously murdered by an invincible zombie.

Three of the episodes in Boris Karloff's memorable *Thriller* series made between 1960 and 1962, featured zombies. In the story *Pigeons from Hell*, by John Kneubuhl, guest stars Brandon de Wilde and David Whorff play two brothers menaced by a female zombie in a sinister mansion. In the episode *The Hollow Watcher* by Jay Simms, a woman Audrey Dalton murders her father-in-law and sews him up in a scarecrow that stands on a hill overlooking her home. Shortly after the man of straw adopts a malevolent life of its own and begins stalking its killers in true zombie fashion. Other guest stars included Sean McClory, Warren Oates and Denver Pyle. In the segment entitled *The Incredible Doctor Markeson* by Donald S. Sanford, Karloff plays a doctor who, back from the grave himself, has discovered a macabre way to resurrect the dead. Trapped in his eerie mansion and forced to undergo a frightening experience are his nephew Dick York and wife Carolyn Keamey.

One episode of *Red Sterling's The Twilight Zone* made in 1963 called *Mr Garrity and the Graves*, told the tale of a con-man's claim that he can restore the dead to life. Unfortunately for guest stars John Dehner and J. Pat O'Malley his story doesn't seem as far-fetched as it sounds.

British television has also tended to ignore the plight of the poor zombie, although tales relating to the animated corpse have appeared in shows such as *Journey into the Unknown*, *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* and *Out of the Unknown*. Zombie-like manifestations have also cropped up recently in the ITC series *Hammer House of Horror* produced by Roy Skelggs, in particular an episode called *The Two Faces of Evil* ●

*In the American tv series Thriller, the episode Pigeons from Hell concerned the tale of two brothers who spend a terrifying night in a mansion which is haunted by one of its former inhabitants who is a Zombie.*



**D**ark and furrowed were some of the **Starbuckers'** brows when I first broke the news that I was joining the rats deserting the sinking ship, SS Great Britain, and moving family, files, stills, posters and library across the channel to France. My colleagues were not, *bien sur*, upset that I was going ... but with what I would be going to.

Their comments at our favoured *sle house* ran from the obvious ("but they speak a funny kind of lingo over there, Tone") to the uninformed ("I think of all the films you'll miss"). The main viewpoint in their increasingly alcoholic conversation was—"you'll hate it, mate ... froggy television stinks!"

*Alors!* At the time of writing and showing off with the occasional French word or expression that (I think) I understand, I've been alive and well (very well) in Paris a good nineteen months or so. And I have to report, even to my own astonishment, that French tv is not that bad.

There's at least two, often three films a night, six nights of the week on the box here (and a late one on Sunday). This presents a golden opportunity to catch up with all the good, middling, even the indifferent French movies—Italian, German, Japanese, Dutch, Polish, etc, etc—which were never deemed important or good (ie, sexy) enough to be imported by the persimmonious British allegedly known as film distributors.

Apart from the old, and not so old cinema movies, there's a score of tele-movies on all channels—the standard of which productions is often much higher than some of the extremely tired examples of film-making currently on release here. This is odd as the tv channels invest money in both cinema and tele-projects (yes, the box and the cinema goes hand-in-hand here, and are not the implacable enemies we know in Britain, or know before Channel Four started improving relations).

Among the tv-movies are some of the reasons for this article—rather more examples of tele-fantasy than I recall in nineteen months of British viewing. Nifty, home-made stuff, I mean; not the odd US fantasy tele-movie (though we have them as well). I've chosen three examples to comment on here (three aired in about six months, not nineteen, incidentally) in the hope that the Beeb, ITV (hah!) or Channel



# TELEFANTASY

— Feature by Tony Crawley —

# FR





# FRANK

Four might be once longer than the ends of their noses or all-expenses-paid trips to America when attempting to buy up some neat tv fodder.

If these shows don't make it across the water, it ain't my fault. If you want them on the box (dubbed or subtitled) start badgering your favourite tv channel... now!

I'll start with two serials, or series—or indeed, *feuilletons* as they're called here (among which animals, *Dallas*, natch, is top, even though J.R. is pronounced "Gee, Air," and speaks like any member of the current Parliamentary opposition).

First series to catch my eyes was **La Guerre des Insectes**—or considering that **Star Wars** is known hereabouts as **La Guerre des Étoiles**, I suppose one could simply label it: **Insect Wars**. I'll admit the main reason I watched the first episode was because I noticed the cast included Victoria Tennant, a British blonde (but *blonde*!) beauty I've nurtured a secret passion for ever since her 1972 feature debut as **The Ragman's Daughter**. (Prunella Gee almost stole me later on from Victoria; not quite).

From title alone, this sounded like a Corman quickie, or much worse Irwin Allen's country... **The Swarm II?** It proved better than that. Based on Jean Courtois-Brieux's book, it was fantasy perhaps only in a slightly futuristic setting, but realistic-documentaryish in a good old *Beet Softly, Softly* manner about fighting an epidemic. The insects—a new, unknown strain (*chrysoaspidites hibets* from Tibet, no less), were the problem, unleashed from a contaminated cargo of the *Antinea* at sea—and battled by the egg-heads at a UNO-like Geneva bureau of foodstuffs control.

Leading this fight—identifying the strain, testing various repellents, etc—were young Mathieu Carrière, the German star who works mainly in France, and our own young and still lovely Ms Tennant. With macro-photography of the little bugs, the increasing experimentation to snuff them out, not to mention the on-going affair between our youngblood leads, this was a good step-by-step gripper—though director Peter Kassovitz could have lightened things more in three rather than four episodes. It works well, though, with the bugs flying all over the place, including the investigators, lowered, *Alien*-like, into the holds of the contaminated

ship, with coveralls suits and huge lights. The suspense really got going as one shifty hustler stole a scientist's bag, containing samples of the bugs for testing in New York, and tried to (a) ransom the stuff and (b) not get bitten himself.

Ranging from Geneva to Perito New York, it was obviously an expensive show. The money was well spent in what ended up as an science-fiction *police* thriller.

Far better, a kind of adult **Doctor Who** with a kick in the lower regions, was *Noires sont les galaxies* (**Black Are The Galaxies**) by Jacques Armand. Here were our old pals again—aliens from somewhere out there invading not so much our planet as the people on it.

They occupy human bodies in true **Body Snatchers** style. With one difference that director Daniel Moosmann couldn't have enough of.

The afflicted, you see, become sort of walking triffids, with what appeared to be the previous season's stock of unsold Christmas trees suddenly bursting—erupting!—out of their chests!

Oh, it was jolly good stuff. Great effects. Or great for television. You'd see the joins in the false chest on a cinema screen (as you can in the second of our three action-replay shots here of the death of François Berrot). On the tube, though—terrific.

But as the arrival of all this new forestry meant the humans died (naturally), so did the ETs—the Exis. So what was the point in coming to our planet? Simple! They wanted peace and quiet and to just live here, inside us. However, their foes from up there, the Zyns, had taken the next shuttle down and occupied other folk to deal out this death blow—with a glance or two from their human's new, fierce red, shining eyes...

And so, one by one, the Exis fell victim to ole red eye. They'd begin suffering in one way or another. Having to take to their beds felling *tres malade, chérie*, or going through cardiac-arrest paroxysms. They'd be chatting a bit to the hospital intern hero (Richard Fontane) or his girl (tasty Catherine Le Prince), feel real bad, clutch at chest or head and whammo...! Out springs another tree with clawing branches.

Sure made a lot of bonfires...

My favourite slice of French tele-fantasy, though, was an FR3 (channel three) tele-film in their Cinema 16 series, which was at





February's Brussel tv festival, and which Roald Dahl would be proud of. This was Pierre Boutron's idea, co-script and movie of *Je Tue II*. The title is a clever *double-entendre*, meaning either I, You, He or I Kill He. The great Luis Bunuel's scenarist, Jean-Claude Carrière, was the co-writer . . . and you can't say better than that. (He also turned up in the cast). And I will, if you'll stick with me, like to spend a trifle longer on unravelling this gem for you. It's worth it. (Even if the stills are not).

We start by hearing a voice-over intoning obviously philosophical thoughts (none of which I understood!) and catch glimpses of the speaker at his desk as the camera roams the mirror and well-stocked shelves in his study. This is Charles Courville, a top French author—an *écrivain*—well-known, loved, respected . . . and bought.

The author finishes reading his latest manuscript changes the final word, writes a large FIN. Freeze-frame. Credits roll and we learn Pierre Vaneck, who I haven't seen for even longer than Victorine Tennant, who he resembles, is playing Courville.

Author's wife comes in, looks over his shoulder, drops cigarette ash all over his manuscript, selects a cassette as there's nothing good on *la tefe*, has hubby sign a cheque for her end, apparently as usual, locks him in his den for the night!

Next morning, we join Courville in his trendy Bogart meek, delivering the manuscript to his editor. Surprise No 1. The editor had already got it! It arrived earlier. Author is greatly flummoxed. He picks up the other manuscript, checks it through, finds the self-same correction on the final page. (I'm suspicious already . . . Last time I saw the editor feila, he had had the Marly-le-Roi forest growing out of his chest . . .)

Editor none too interested in Author's alarm. Doesn't like his book's title, *Je Tue II*, either. Changes it to *The Rare Bird*. At home, Author fiercely checks if his wife or secretary have entered his domain or touched his things. He hates having his things touched. (Don't all we *écrivains*, I say to the wife). Now, they know nothing. They leave. No, wait, the wife hands him a cheque. He'd filled out and signed two . . . Ahai!

Author next has secretary witness him signing his new book's contract. Phone rings. Publisher's secretary thanks him for being so prompt in sending the signed contract around . . . I But he'd not written "read and approved" above his signature. Well, of course not. He was just going to when she phoned . . .

That night he decided to test his theory







about something—someone—somehow—cloning his every written move. With his wife close by, he knocks off a novella in a few hours. She checks each typed page against the last. No repetitions. He grips the new manuscript firmly as they go to bed. He tucks it under his pillow... no, okay, inside his pyjamas, then!

Morning. Up and dressed, script still clutched in hand, he makes ready to deliver it. He checks his mail, first. Nothing there. He calls his editor. No, the secretary has had nothing from Courville in her mail. A smile of triumph and off he trots. He's opening the door into the street when the concierge calls him. She has an envelope for him. The clone copy has arrived!

So has his secretary. She has her own key to his flat, which surprised him. So he checks her out now. Next to his wife in his study, he writes a short note to the secretary in the next room. "Will you come and see me, please." He holds it in his hand and waits. Doorbell rings. The concierge has a letter for the secretary. She opens it, reads it, knocks on Author's door. "You want to see me...?" The third clone!

From hereon, it's hardly surprising that Courville acts as if he's having a breakdown. He wins the big prize for *The Rare Bird*, turns on the media hordes chasing him, upsets one of those tv book shows—"I've never written anything! I'm an usurper! And I'm going now—I need to take a crap!" When his new play opens, he goes on stage and berates the audience for applauding such rubbish. "You should choose your books and plays with more care." He then goes home, has his wife pack a small case, and takes off...

He enters a small hotel room, opens his case, changes into a good suit, dictates an apologetic message on his tape-recorder for the hotel manager—"I'm sorry about the mess". He takes out a gun, holds a pillow in front of his chest and shoots himself.

The mirror behind him shatters. He does not. He's still alive. There's a hole in his shirt. Another in the back of his coat. The bullet passed straight through him!

He chuckles the pillow away in disgust, holds the gun against his shirt and fires. Same thing. Gun to head—bang! Same thing! Gun to ceiling—bang! He hits a water pipe... He's made a mess, all right.

He runs from the hotel (the neighbouring residents were beginning to complain about the noise) and charges off to a cliff-top. He doesn't stop. He flings himself off. Down, down, down, to the stony beach below in a crumpled heap, one leg askew. Dead?

Rubbish! His fingers move. He turns. He gets up. *Damn!*

He runs again. Straight to the little railway station. Breathless, he asks the time of the next train. "Where to, sir?" The next train anywhere...! He rushes on to the line as it comes straight at him... And as it goes, he's still standing there. The train, too, has gone right through him!

"*Bon! J'ai compris.*" he says. "Good! I understand." (I'm glad someone does).

Back in Paris, he tries to buy a copy of *The Rare Bird*. "Never heard of it, mate!" Well, *Je Tui*, then? "That's not due out for a month!" "I thought so!" He goes to the theatre where his play opened. No one there has heard of it. He leaves, sits on the road, and a moustachioed guy with a bow-tie asks if he's feeling okay. "Yes, yes, sure, fine." "You look," says Bow-Tie, played by the Bunuel writer, Carrière, "as if you might be thinking of, well, suicide..."

"I've tried suicide," says Courville. "It's difficult to live when you don't exist. And I simply don't exist... I'm a character in a book."

Ah bow, so that's it. But wait. Bow-Tie can top that denouement. "You, too?" he says... "Look!" He opens his coat, flasher-style. He's dressed for the 18th Century. He points to the man across the road, an old couple heading towards the bench, a girl watering flowers on the balcony over there. They're all characters in books. "She sold very well," says Bow-Tie. "They keep filming him over there. I must say I thought I'd be long forgotten by now—but they keep doing me, too. When were you published?"

"I'm not yet," mutters Courville. "What! You mean you're still in manuscript...? Well! You know where it is. Then, you're lucky. Go quickly and destroy it. And yourself..."

And that he does. He runs all the way to "his" flat, bursts into "his" front door, crashes through the locked door of "his" study... to find he had shot himself, the real author, at his desk. He finds the manuscript—both of them. (Ah!) Burns them in the fireplace and slowly evaporates out of the frame...

Now, if that isn't better than *Crossroads*, *Doctor Who*, *Dallas*, *Match of the Day*, *Parkys* and *Fall Guy* (not to mention the last two attempts at French cinema sf), then I don't know what is.

Underken your furrowed brows back in the elehouse, fellas. Froggyvision doesn't stink at all. (That's only the caemember!) ●

## JEAN ROLLIN

Interview by  
Frederic Levy

**T**hose who have been once to the Paris Fantastic Film Festival, those who have seen how an audience reacts there, know that, contrary to what is often said, the fantastic is a French genre. Yet there is a mystery: the only director in France to make fantastic films regularly, Jean Rollin, has never achieved a real success. Many scorn all that he does, laughing at every new "Rollinade". They would be certainly more respectful if they were aware that Rollin does all his films on a shoe string.

The man is not worried, anyway, and smokes his pipe with the tranquility of the sage. "When I started my film career, I could have done what other directors did—shoot a couple of thrillers first and gradually work my way up. I chose to stay out of such a system, and I have managed to do twelve films so far, all of which somehow are out of this system. Of course, there are many things I should have liked to do but could never do—for instance, I never had time to work with my actors. But there's none of my films I wish I had not done. Admittedly, I might have fun directing a multimillion dollar movie, but, however expensive a film may be, you always have regrets when it is finished. Anyway, things are getting better: for my next film, *La morte vivante*, I'll have four weeks' shooting and a £100,000 budget!"

Don't say a *Zombies' Lake* can't be a Golden Pond! *cinema*; Most of your films are haunted by vampires, but what's the importance of zombies in your universe?

**Jean Rollin:** I made a film called *Les raisins de la mort* (Grapes of Death) a few years back, which related to zombies. I haven't sold it to England yet, as it might have trouble with the British censorship, but I am negotiating with a couple of prospective buyers. Right now, I am preparing a film called *La morte vivante* (The Living Dead Girl), which, as a zombie film, offers the originality of having a zombie with a conscience—the girl of the title comes back from the dead, but she is aware she is dead. The story takes place in an old volcano area in Auvergne. After an earthquake, gases come up from underground and cause the dead girl to wake up. First she goes back—unconsciously—to the places where she used to live when she was a child. Gradually, as she retrieves things—her old house, her child's toys—her memory comes back. Then she meets an old girlfriend, who teaches her to talk, to live again, and helps her to entirely recover her conscience. But, of course, once she has recovered her conscience, the dead girl wants to go back to the dead.

For her life is not a life: she needs blood, and her friend has to get her victims (like Aida Vali did in *Eyes Without a Face*). And

the end will be a very unhappy one.

**You once told me *Les raisins de la mort* was an assignment, and more precisely a rip off of Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*.**

Not exactly. The craze then was catastrophe films. Thus we took *The Poseidon Adventure* and it reduced it to a diagram to see how it was built: basically, it was a group of people moving from a place to another and stopped on their way—for various reasons—every four minutes. We took that construction. But, as, obviously, we did not have the money to make a catastrophe film, we decided to shift to the fantastic. Then we thought of Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*.

Yet, as I wanted to avoid being accused of ripoff, I made a film which was the contrary of Romero's film: in *Night of the Living Dead*, claustrophobia is the dominant element; normal people are locked in and the dead are outside; in my film, normal people would constantly move outside.

So the film was an assignment, but I do like it a lot, as I managed to include quite a few personal things, especially in the final part. Anyway, since you have mentioned *Night of the Living Dead*, what other references would you name in zombie films?

To me, the masterpiece is *White Zombie*. With no contest. It's a magic film, teeming with poetic ideas. I also like John Gilling's *Plague of the Zombies*.

I have seen Romero's *Night* recently on video: it's still a strong film, which still achieves its purpose—it really scares you, and it does it right from the beginning in a day sequence, probably because of the use of black and white and its television look.

I am less enthusiastic about *Dawn of the Dead*, which is technically stunning, but nothing more than an accumulation of massacres. I'd say about the same thing about Lucio Fulci's *Zombi 2*: an accumulation of massacres, too, but with a few surprising ideas, like that curious scene with the boat in New York harbour at the beginning. But no great shakes altogether. There is a Romero film I like, though commercially it was a failure—*Martin*. It's a extraordinary vampire film.

**Why haven't you mentioned *Zombie's Lake* in the list of your zombie films so far?**

Because my responsibility on this film was only a technical one. I was hired as a director the day before shooting, while I was about to go on holiday—I had packed my suitcases. For some reason, the producers found themselves without a director, and they asked me if I would take up the job. I accepted, taking it as a challenge.

Only after a week did I begin to understand what the story was about, as the only two copies of the script that were available were

different! I merely followed the producers' instructions. I had some fun doing that, but this *Zombie's Lake* is by no means a film of mine. A film can be my film only if I have previously worked on the script, as I think the story is something essential in a film.

**But curiously, whereas many people recognize the visual qualities of your films, you are most often criticized for the thinness of your scripts.**

No, I am criticized because I write scripts people do not like, which is different! On purpose, very often I follow the principle of automatic writing. And I am not a photographer: sets and colours have only a function in the story and must be already contained in the script. An automobile junkyard is of no interest. A travelling theatre inside an automobile junkyard is more like me. A grandfather's clock is of no interest either. A vampire woman getting out of this clock at midnight, that's me! There is no such thing in *Zombie's Lake*: I was asked to film Nazi soldiers, but I do not like soldiers, and Nazi soldiers even less!

Of course, I understand that some people may be disconcerted when they see my universe—I one admits I have a universe. It is clear now why you used a pseudonym to sign that *Zombie's Lake*. But why did you use the pseudonym of Lazer instead of one of your usual pseudonyms?

Lazer is not a pseudonym. It's the name of a Spanish director who really exists and who appeared on the set a couple of times, but actually did nothing. I don't know why he was there.

**You yourself have just eluded—when mentioning "disconcerted" audiences—to the lukewarm reception your films usually have in France, as compared to the success some lousy US movies achieve.**

The first reason for that is a purely commercial one: American films are given more publicity, and the mere fact that it is American gives an American film an advantage in people's appreciation. The second reason is that what the public is after is mainly horror, which is not my genre. Logically enough, the most successful of all my films was *Les raisins de la mort*, which did have gone to the *l'émancipation*, because I'd been asked to do it in that style. But even there horror belonged in something else; it was included in a dramatic construction. When a character severed a girl's head, he had reasons to do so.

Though my universe is that of the fantastic, it is not that of the fantastic people are used to, and those who believe they'll see something similar to an old Hammer film when they go and see one of my films won't find what they are after. ●



# ZOMBIE MOVIES



Zombies, the Undead, the Living Dead, all names for those mobile cadavers which are now, mostly due to directors George Romero and Lucio Fulci, very big box-office business. Whereas contemporary zombie movies usually consist of gouts of blood flying across the screen, lots of bullets through rotting heads and a good proportion of the cast ending up as a zombie's take away lunch, it wasn't always like that.

The zombies of ancient folk-lore, originating in the Caribbean, but also in the English counties of Norfolk and Cornwall, were neither cannibal nor indestructible. Instead, raised by voodoo or black magic, they were often slave-like and used as cheap, uncomplaining labour in cane fields or mines. The 1932 film *White Zombie* the first-ever film dealing directly with the phenomenon, starred Bela Lugosi as "Murder" Legendre. As owner of a Haiti sugar mill, Legendre used zombies as his workers. Despite a short shooting schedule and low budget, *White Zombie* works superbly, mostly due to Lugosi's excellent performance. Obsessed with the thought of marrying another plantation owner's fiancée (Madge Bellamy) he uses voodoo to put her into an undead trance. Scenes such as a voodoo funeral at a crossroads and Legendre's "bodyguard" of six zombies, coupled with a haunting Negro spiritual score, make *White Zombie* one of the horror films of the thirties. Eight years later Victor Halperin, the director of the film, and the producer of the film, brother Edward, made *Revolt of the Zombies*. In this Dean Jagger starred as a character using zombies to fight with the French in the First World War. Also the film had nothing of the lyricism and pure horror of the previous feature, Abbott and Costello never met the undead but the voodoo world trembled when in 1940 *The Ghost Breakers* brought a zombie face to face with Bob Hope. The film was a week comedy, though high on atmosphere, and the best line of the picture was reserved for Hope's black valet, "Zat you, Zom?" he stutters nervously when he hears a shuffle in the closet. 1941 brought *King of the Zombies*, with Henry Victor reviving the dead to use as soldiers in World War Two. Director Jacques Tourneur and producer Val Lewton, who made the magnificent *The Cat People* in 1942, produced another minor masterpiece the following year with *I Walked With a Zombie*. ➤



WENN IN DER HÖLLE KEIN PLATZ MEHR IST  
KOMMEN DIE TOTEN AUF DIE ERDE ZURÜCK



# OMBIE



HIER "FRÖHLICHEN" GEBILLEN WERDEN ANDER DO NARHTEN GEGENWÄRTIG VERSTETEN



## Das Leichenhaus der lebenden Toten

ARTHUR KENNEDY, Das Leichenhaus der lebenden Toten, William Lydon

Far left: The poster art for the 1943 Val Lewton masterpiece I Walked with a Zombie. Left: The poster art for a very different type of Living Dead movie, George Romero's Zombies: Dawn of the Dead. Above: The German poster art for The Living Dead at the Manchester Morgue. Below far left: A scene from an early zombie picture, Zombies of Broadway. Below center: Zombies were also the title story of the serial Zombies of the Stratosphere. Far right: Among the above was a young Leonard Nimoy, before his dark were poster. Below left: The gory poster artwork for the obscure Zombies of the Savanah. Below: An intriguing image from the prebook for Revolt of the Zombies (1940).



Sensational title aside, the RKO film concerned a nurse working on a sugar plantation in the West Indies (Frances Dee). The island's natives are plagued with superstition, believing the plantation owner's wife to be one of the undead. And how right they are! The film's finest sequence has the nurse and the wife walking through the cane fields at night, knowing a voodoo ritual to be taking place. With only the hissing of the wind through the cane branches and the repetitive pounding of the native drums Tourneur makes this a genuine edge-of-the-seat sequence. After *I Walked With a Zombie* the genre went into decline for some years. The boring *Dead Men Walk* appeared in 1943. Only one actual dead man walked and he wasn't very exciting. *Zombies on Broadway* in 1945 showed just how far down the tubes the now drug-dependent Bela Lugosi had gone since his triumph as *Murder Legendre* just thirteen years before. In *Scared Stiff* (a remake of *The Ghost Breakers*) in 1952 Jerry Lewis and Dean Martin tangled with some very mild-looking zombies. Audiences were bored stiff. In the same year Republic Studios, who did their best to make Poverty Row respectable produced *Zombies of the*



**Stratosphere**, a Commando Cody serial which re-emerged in 1957 edited into a 70 minute feature and re-titled **Satan's Satellites**.

The 50s were generally a bad decade for the living dead. **Teenage Zombies**, **Voodoo Island** (with an embarrassed-looking Boris Karloff) and **Zombies of More-Teu** (which with its plot of zombies guarding a jewel seems to have been the inspiration for John Carpenter's **The Fog**) all did little to further interest in reviving the genre. **The Four Skulls of Jonathan Drake** (1959) was more notable for its title rather than anything that happened on screen.

1960 had two Mexican movies shuffle onto the screen. **The Infernal Dead** (the US title of which was the curious **Curse of the Doll People**) and the inevitable **Sante Versus the Zombies**, in which Mexico's favourite screenhero (a wrestler who wears a body stocking and a mask and whose films usually contain a couple of bouts and a tag match) was pitted against zombie wrestlers! Santo won on points. It was left to Roger Corman in 1962 to inject some life into the subject with the Valdemar segment of his **Tales of Terror**. Based upon the Edgar Allen Poe story **Events**

in the Case of M Valdemar the title character (played by Vincent Price) is caught at the point of death by mesmerist Basil Rathbone and left in a comatose state for many months, neither dead nor alive. The ending of the story is one of the great sequences of horror cinema. Valdemar rises from his death bed to attack Rathbone, who dies of fright. The trance broken, Valdemar, in a matter of moments, liquifies.

**I Eat your Skin** made in 1962, had to wait nine years before a cinema release, where it was to be found on a double bill with **I Drink Your Blood**. And, frankly, it wasn't worth the wait.

In 1964, while the world was getting over the musical **The Incredibly Strange Creatures Who Stopped Living And Became Mixed-Up Zombies**, Amicus made their first anthology movie, **Dr Terror's House Of Horrors**. The "Voodoo" segment of this had Roy Castle as a plageristic musician who finds that voodoo vengeance for stealing the music from a ritual is inescapable. While Castle was appearing in the Amicus film, Roy Schieder (new star of **Jews**, **Marathon Men**, **All That Jazz** and others) was making his debut in Del Tenney's **The Curse of the Living Corpse**. On seeing the result it's no wonder



Above: Not quite a member of the *Walking Dead* but a victim of Voodoo in *I Walked with a Zombie* (1943).

Below: A gaggle of *Zombies* from the pioneer of the genre, *White Zombie* (1932), which starred Bela Lugosi. Bottom: *More Zombies*, this time from the files of programmer *Invisible Invaders*. Opposite below: A scene from *Zombies of the Savannah*.



that this is the feature Schieder omits from his filmography.

1966 saw Hammer make their only zombie movie. Set in Cornwall, **Pledge of the Zombies** was directed by John Gilling and starred Andre Morell, Diana Clare and Brook Williams. The squire of the manor (John Carson) is using zombies as his workforce in his tin-mines and has an eye on Diane Clare joining their ranks. **Pledge of the Zombies** is one of Hammer's finest films in their long history for several reasons. Peter Bryan's script is tight and matches Gilling's skilful direction and muted use of Technicolor. Also notable is Roy Ashton's make-up. Until this film most living dead in the cinema looked either pale with white eyes or merely unwell. Ashton's work and Gilling's capacity to terrify are shown to the full in the dream sequence where Brook Williams imagines himself in ➤



the graveyard where Alice (Jacqueline Pearce, later to play Servando in *Blake's 7*) has just been buried. Green fog swirls around eerily as slowly the new graves begin to bulge and rotting hands push through the earth as the zombies rise. Ashton's creations look genuine, dressed in old sacking, with flaking skin, peeling hands and white eyeballs. After fighting them off, Williams, to save Alice's soul, decapitates her with a shovel. Gilling almost outdoes this with the final sequence with Andre Morell finding the squire's voodoo dolls and throwing them on the fire, resulting in the zombies in the mine bursting into flames and causing an explosion. Of all the post-1960 zombie movies *Plague of the Zombies* is the one that most provokes shivers of fear rather than shudders of revulsion. Considering the success of the film it is surprising that Hammer never made another excursion into Undead territory.

Just three years later came the film that was to alter the entire zombie genre, and would define new rules and lore. All the more surprisingly was that it was made by amateurs. Many stories have grown around the making of *Night of the Living Dead*. Although producers Karl Hardman and Russell Striener claimed the movie was just a one-off, director George Romero, who would cover much the same ground (though without zombies) in *The Crazies* five years later, announced that *Night of the Living Dead* was only the first part of a proposed Zombie trilogy that he would make. However it would be another ten years before he got around to making the second part.

Surprisingly it was the mild mannered Peter Cushing who provided the next memorable screen zombie in the 1971 Arnicus movie *Tales From the Crypt*, the stories being taken from the old EC comic of the same name. In the story entitled *Poetic Justice* Cushing played Arthur Grimsdyke, a kindly old widower. Driven to suicide by an evil property developer he comes back from the grave to exact heart-rending revenge. Roy

Ashton again performed another splendid make-up job, adding long lank hair and heavy gristle to Cushing's almost skeletal face and giving him empty eye sockets, made by using layers of black glue over Cushing's eyes. If Grimsdyke was a good man forced into killing then the title characters of *Night of the Living Dead* were just the reverse. They just enjoyed killing people. Members of the Knights Templar cult are raised from the dead after four hundred years to wreak havoc in the present day. One of the many clever aspects of director Armando De Ossorio's 1972 Spanish/Portuguese co-production was that the zombies were blind, having had their eyes pecked out by crows hundreds of years before and have to find their victims by sound alone. Scenes of them riding horses at night were shown in slow motion, giving them an eerie dream-like quality. This trick was also used in Roy Ward Baker's *The Legend of the Seven Golden Vampires*. Curiously when *Night of the Living Dead* was given a major re-release in America in 1976 so was *Night of the Blind Dead* but with new black and white prints being struck instead of the original colour ones. Spain's horror superstar Paul Naschy made *Rebellion of the Zombies* in 1972, which did little to add to his status of anonymity outside Europe, the make-up in this Jacinto Molina directed production was pretty poor, something which could not be said for *Children Shouldn't Play With Dead Things*. Allen Ormsby's (now a writer, lately having scripted *The Cat People* remake) make-up creations were superb, notably Orville, the lead ghoul. It's just a pity that the acting and script of this dire black comedy couldn't match up.

In 1973 *The Blind Dead* returned in (surprisingly enough) *Return of the Blind Dead*, again directed by Armando De Ossorio with some chilling moments but not as much atmosphere or verve as the first film. Around this time American International Pictures had their 'blackploitation' cycle in full swing with films like *Breacula*, *Blackenstein* and *Scream*, so a black-orientated zombie movie was the next logical move. Combining zombies with the major elements from some of their successful thrillers like *Coffy* and *Trouble Man* they came up with *Sugar Hill*. Understandably pleased at having her boyfriend killed by Mafia boss Robert (Count Yorga) Quarry Sugar Hill (played by Marki Bey) uses voodoo to resurrect a team of zombie hit men for revenge. Staggeringly silly, from the "slick" jive-talk laced script to the mud-caked undead the film is, never the less, enjoyable, even though sometimes the pleasure comes from knowing it is a utterly dumb. In 1974 the *Blind Dead* attacked in the imaginatively titled *Attack of the Blind Dead*. De Ossorio's third outing for the Knights Templar was by now boring and predictable and brought an end to the cycle.

Jorge Grau provided a film shot in Yorkshire with an Italian and Spanish crew and with an international cast. Also known as *Don't Open the Window* and the amazing *Breakfast at the Manchester Morgue* it opened in London as *The Living Dead at the Manchester Morgue*. The film was praiseworthy on many counts, good acting from Ray Lovelock as the hero and Arthur Kennedy as a ultra right wing policeman and many chilling scenes, enhanced by excellent dubbing by Nick Alexander who used regional accents and not just the usual mid-

Atlantic drawl. The undead in this film are activated by ultrasonic waves emanating from a pest-killing machine the Government are testing. Some good camerawork by Francesco Sempere and makeup and special effects by Gianetto Di Rossi (later to for Lucio Fulci) made the film, considering its ludicrous title, gripping and intriguing. It was also to show the graphic style of violence and gore (ie a zombie having part of its chest hacked off with an axe and a policeman having his eyes gouged out) that would be the hallmark of Italian horror films of later years.

*Deathdream* (1974 aka *Dead of Night* and *The Night Andy Came Home*) provided one of the first make-up credits for a young Tom Savini. Savini's work was to make a young soldier who has returned from Vietnam gradually disintegrate throughout the film, the fact being that he is actually already dead and has returned only by the power of his parent's faith. What starts as an unsettling ghost story turns into routine formula once it is established that he can stay alive only by drinking blood. Despite a spirited ending in a drive-in cinema the movie never re-gains the tension of the first twenty minutes. Spain's *The Devil's Cross* surfaced briefly in 1975. The main point of interest in this lacklustre Paul Naschy vehicle was that it was directed by Englishman John Gilling, but alas the film had nothing of the style of his *Plague of the Zombies*.

In 1977 the movie was made that would be the catalyst for the current boom. True to his word George Romero made his sequel. In Pittsburgh, in colour and in secrecy, *Dawn of the Dead*, (British title: *Zombies—Dawn of the Dead*). Co-produced by Italian director Dario Argento, the movie was filmed in and around the Munroeville shopping Mall in Romero's home town, Dawn's story carried on immediately after *Night*.

In a chaotic television station we see the state of things. The whole USA, possibly the whole world, is in the grip of the zombie. Romero himself appears as a studio director in these early scenes. An assault on a ghetto to clear it of zombies results in both zombie and human fatalities. Stealing a helicopter, Peter (David Emge), Fran (Gaylen Ross) and SWAT men Roger and Ken (Scott H. Reiniger and Ken Foree) find the shopping Mall to be the perfect hide-out, stocked with all they could possibly need. Setting up base they wipe out the zombie inhabitants and seem to have an idyllic life. The marvellous twist is that the snakes in this particular Eden are not the living dead but a band of Hell's Angels, who breach the defences and re-admit the zombies into the Mall for the staggeringly gruesome climax. From the first few minutes Romero's intention is clear, he wants to pummel his audience with images and the way he does it is with blood and guts. In the SWAT team's ghetto attack we see people fiddled with bullets, parts of skulls being blown away, a woman having part of her arm bitten away by her now undead husband and, most famous of all and courtesy of Tom Savini who also appears as a biker, a man having his entire head blown apart by a shotgun blast. The film is often blackly comic in tone. The zombies are helpless, almost pathetic creatures, lurching and staggering while the four humans pick them off. But Romero has a message within the eruptions of gore and disintegrating faces. Even though the Mall holds more goods and food than





Left: A corpse rises again in *Invisible Invaders*. Above: Boris Karloff appeared in the Val Lewton horror item *Isle of the Dead* (1945). Below: A scene from *Invasion des Morts Vivants* (invasion of the Living Dead, I'll be bound!)



they could possibly ever see Pater fights the bikers rather than shere it. The Angels raid the Mall's tills even though they have no possible use for the money. The zombies have an instinct for the Mall and keep returning. **Dawn of the Dead** has been called by some critics the natural extinction of American consumerism.

Naturally with long explicit scenes of the bikers being disembowled and eaten the film had censor trouble. American authorities gave it an X rating which Romero rebelled against: as, in the States, an X is usually given to hard core porn. United Film Distributors stood by him and released it with a self-imposed Over 18s policy. The controversy certainly didn't harm the box-office. In Britain James Ferman came down hard upon it, taking out some six minutes from assorted scenes.

In Italy it had been released as **Zombi**, with a print running fifteen minutes longer than the American version due to Argento's control over the cut of the film for Europe. He also altered the film's score by Goblin, having it mixed up-front in pounding stereo where Romero had only used snatches of it and even then, quietly.

Within weeks came **Zombi 2**, produced by Fabrizio De Angelis and starring Tisa Farrow, Ian McCulloch and Richard Johnson. (Strange how these people are barely known in their home country but are superstars on the Continent.) The director was a man whose work up until then had mostly been home-consumption comedies and thrillers and a few westerns: Lucio Fulci.

Released in Britain as **Zombie Flesh Eaters** it dealt with Dr Menard (Johnson) running a shanty hospital on one of the Antilles Isles. Stricken by a strange malady the islanders are dying and returning as zombies.

A boat arrives in New York Harbour from the island and the first policeman aboard gets it in the neck, literally. Reporter Peter West (McCulloch) is assigned to the case and meets Anne Bowles (Tisa Farrow), the daughter of the doctor whose boat it is and who vanished in the Antilles. Naturally they decide to investigate. **Zombie Flesh Eaters** is more than just a quick rip-off although it has some obvious deficiencies. The main one is that the script never really resolves itself. Are the living dead caused by voodoo or a virus? We never really find out. Although slow for the first hour (a fault shared with **Dawn of the Dead** which suffers from a sagging middle section) the final half hour is superb. Trapped in the hospital, West and the girl, along with Brian (Al Cliver), battle against the ever advancing zombies. Hera Fulci wins hands down over Romero. The zombies look the part, decaying and corrupted against Romero's who look as if they have just had an undercoat of green emulsion. Hurling firebombs and blasting with a shotgun the three escape. They reach their boat to find from the radio that the zombies have already reached New York and are in the process of tearing the announcer to pieces.

So, slyly, instead of pretending to be a sequel to the Romero films it cleverly sets itself up as a prequel, showing how the zombies got there in the first place! Fulci's direction linked with good camerawork by the brilliant Sergio Salvati and an electronic score by Fabio Frizzi and Georgio Tucci made **Zombie Flesh Eaters** an international success.

The success was repeated several months

later with **City of the Living Dead**, again directed by Fulci and produced by De Angelis. Christopher George, Katherine McCall and Janet Agran starred in this tale of a ghostly priest with retribution on his mind. For this Fulci added violence with a capital V. A man having a power drill rammed through his head and a woman vomiting up her intestines were just some of the grim delights served up. Shortly to be released in this country it has, amazingly, suffered only one censor cut, the drill sequence. The rest of the film, including three people having their brains torn out and the priest making **The Beyond** Fulci made a non-zombie horror film. **The Black Cat**. Box office returns were not spectacular, it seemed that Europeans equated Lucio Fulci with zombies, nothing else. No zombies, no go. They appear almost as an afterthought in **The Beyond**, the tale of a hotel built over one of the Seven Gates of Hell, although the zombies work well in the film. The final ten minutes as David Warbeck and Katherine McCall fight their way through a hospital corridor swarming with the walking dead only to find themselves forced into the **Beyond** are marvellously executed, a sign that Fulci is perfecting his craft. His film which followed, **The House by the Cemetery**, also has something from the other side of the grave lurking in the cellar of the house in the title. It remains to be seen whether his newest film, **The New York Ripper**, will be another success or go the way of **The Black Cat**.

Other continental filmmakers saw the receipts and realised that zombies equalled money. Francesco Martino took Ian McCulloch for what was a virtual remake of **Zombie Flesh Eaters** in a film known under three different titles: **Zombie Holocaust**, **Hall of the Living Dead** and **Zombies of the Savannah**. (To add to the confusion Miramax Films will be releasing this later this year, possibly under the title **Zombie Virus**.)

Joe D'Amato, director of, amongst others, the **Black Emanuelle** film, took the stars of those, Laura Gensler and made **Island of the Zombies**, which will be shortly available in this country on video. And anyone who has seen the recent video release **Zombies Lake** (directed by Jean Rollin) knows why it wasn't shown in cinemas. The projectionist would have been lynched. **Return of the Zombies** (I didn't know they'd been away) directed by J.L. Merino is as yet unreleased but can it be so very different from all the others?

Few of these new wave of zombie films have any of the style or skill of a Romero or a Fulci but are merely an excuse for a bloodbath. Yet they make money. And the future?

Well, it is known that two of the five segments of Romero's upcoming **Creepshow**, from Stephen King stories, include the living dead (Old habits die hard). And he still has to finish the trilogy, he believes in around 1986, with a film tentatively titled **Day of the Dead**. **The Other Hell** presents us with an exorcist fighting evil in a convent full of zombie nuns! **Sewer Zombies** (the title says it all, doesn't it?) starring David Warbeck is only just completed but it will, by no means, be the last.

Whatever happens, as long as audiences keep paying their money then film makers will keep on making zombie pictures (usually in Italy) and the current zombie cycle should go on for at least a while yet.



# GE RO

**Starburst:** You have been quoted as saying that, in your opinion, *Zombies* is simply a schlock movie.

**George Romero:** Oh, that. It was something that happened at the Delfes Film Festival. When we showed *Zombies* we lost 30% of the audience in the first fifteen minutes. That Festival is really all silver-haired women in their diamonds and jewels going out on a Saturday night to see something safe, like *Old Boyfriends*. As I walked out of the cinema, I found there was a group of them lying in wait for me. They had left in the first part of the movie but had purposely waited around so they could get me. One of the women said, "You're not kidding me, this is just schlock disguised as art." I said to her that I was surprised she felt it was disguised. I also went on to say that if she wanted to have a serious talk on the definition of art, it was another conversation. *Zombies* is a celebration of schlock, not in the negative sense, and that was really all I was trying to say. I was very energetic about making the film and am very pleased with it—that is what my art is. *Zombies* is popular form cinema and I don't



# GEORGE ROMERO

Interview by  
Alan Jones

need to say that it's trashy but it is emulated from all the great schlock classics that we've had over the past 20 or 30 years. That is the stuff that I watch.

*So any allegorical content in your movie is accidental?*

Let's put it this way, I didn't want to accent it. In *Zombies* the allegory is very frontal, very obvious but I don't think I'm saying anything that's new. Nor do I think I'm answering any questions or imposing them. I'm using the horror fantasy genre to restate the same things a lot of other people have stated more eloquently. If I was trying to write social criticism in that way I might possibly have a readership of twenty or thirty and be hanging out in Greenwich Village somewhere. I have the best of both worlds. I love popular form cinema. I have loved it all my life and I think that more craftsmanship goes into it on many levels than goes into, so called, serious cinema. It's hard to talk about it any more as the word art seems to have this strange connotation. I don't apologise for anything I've done, I'm proud of it and it is outrageous to me that anyone should try and separate

fantasy and horror and say it isn't art because it deals with... whatever, it's like saying Rock isn't music, it's rock."

*You have pushed the level of screen violence and gore to new levels with *Zombies*. What do you feel about this?*

In the last ten years we've seen some pretty extreme stuff, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *The Last House on the Left*, *Night of the Living Dead* actually for what it represented at the time. No one these days is going to be particularly revolted or startled by a skeleton jumping out of a closet or a blob oozing under the door. You have to say OK that's how far we've come, if we are going to extremes, let's exercise it. People say I'm conscienceless in what I do. I find it conscienceless to treat that kind of extremely violent expression in a very ponderous way. This gloomy overtone that finds it necessary to say that basically man is inhuman to man. Take a film like *Prophecy*, that's the sort of approach I object to. Disguising that film as an ecology movie is like an apology as if they had pangs of conscience. At least a film like *The Hills Have Eyes* doesn't apologise for ►





what it sets out to do and has a lot of energy behind it. That is the other side of the horror fantasy experience. It's a vicarious roller-coaster ride: it's a hot pepper: it's horseradish. I think if there is a difference between what I'm doing by taking the "splatter cinema" genre to its edge, is that I'm taking the physical trappings as far as it has come and combined them with the tradition of the good popcorn eating enjoyable experience. The two don't clash at all. Just because I'm showing somebody being disembowelled doesn't mean that I have to get heavy and put a message behind it. I don't feel that in reflecting a negative human condition you, in essence have to make a negative film. I was never traumatised by *The Last House on the Left* like I was by a film like *Repulsion*. If you want to make serious statements, I think you are better off doing them in a satirical way by making the surface of the film separate from that entirely. I don't have a conscience at all. Just because I am dealing with gross graphic violence doesn't mean I have to shy away from making the film fun

*What do you feel about the British censor cutting **Zombies**?*

As far as I'm concerned the intention or texture of the film hasn't been affected at all. There is less than three minutes cut altogether. The version released here in England is the American version of the film. There are two versions. The Italian one missed more things out than had in, I don't mean the violent aspects but the humour and characterisation. The music was also wall to wall Goblin whereas I wanted to make use of the shopping mall muzak and use the Goblin for the more traditional scoring elements. There is one violent effect that is in the American version that isn't in the Italian one and that is where the helicopter blade takes off the top of one of the zombie's heads. When the film was first presented to the censor here it was Dario's (Argento) European version which was felt to be very exploitive with the result that a lot was cut. The distributor (Target) freaked out over that decision and decided to submit the American version instead. The censor then felt that the film was softened so much by the values that

the humour injected that they decided to leave a lot in that they had cut from the previous version. I had a dialogue with censor Jim Ferman which is something that I have never had anywhere else in the world. Logic and motivation was applied which is the direct opposite of what happened in Ontario in Canada where 13 minutes was cut. There fans wrote to the papers and openly booed the censor in the cinema. Yes, we are a cause celebre in Ontario. On an absolute level, of course we would prefer not to have the film touched at all. This is the real world however and I don't think people will get any less enjoyment from it as it now stands."

*How closely did you work with Dario Argento?*  
For about 45 minutes actually. Dario came over and saw me to do four camera set ups in 45 minutes and went back to Italy shaking his head. Our basic arrangements with Dario and his brother, Claudio, was purely financial. The only creativity he had was on the soundtrack. It really was a case of director to director. He wouldn't have liked anyone messing around with his stuff so he wasn't going to mess



around with mine. Any discussions Dario and I had were based on us as personalities who both had a company based in financial dealings. Can we both lend our mutual clout to various projects? We want to work together again, not necessarily a film for either of us as director either.

*We've had to wait ten years for **Zombies**, will we have to wait another ten for the third part of the "Dead" trilogy, **Day of the Dead**?*

It will be at least five years. Exactly the same thing happened after **Zombies** that happened after **Night of the Living Dead**. We had people calling saying could we have the next one ready in two weeks. I don't want to do it now, let everybody else do it like they have in Italy. **Zombie 2** is out and **Zombie 3** is on the way.

*Are there any cinematic limits, morally, you are wary of breaching?*

There haven't been so far. I might hesitate if I were making films like **The Deer Hunter** because that is a very real situation that can be perceived as a rehearsal to a real life experience. I would hesitate more in that context than the fantasy one. If you note for example the the age of the "splatter cinema" ►



coincides with the age in the USA where people were refusing to go off to war. It is criticism from over-statement. It's overkill and obviously so. It carries things to an absurd degree that we know is absurd. Nothing I do will have a causative effect. No one is going to come out of *Zombies* and eat someone! Within the context of fantasy I have yet to feel that I was stepping over the line and I have no moral compunction about it whatsoever.

*How do you feel still being referred to on advertising etc. As George "Night of the Living Dead" Romero after all these years?*

I don't think I can complain. I've come a long way because of that film and anyway it kind of washes over me now. Right after that film I went through a paranoia which had nothing to do with the genre but with the realisation of what business was like in the States by being characterised in such a limiting way. It took me a long time to get used to the fact that they would treat me like a horror film director regardless. Your last success is what they measure you by and if it was a horror film then that is what they pull off the shelf for you to do. If I was approached by a studio now, they would offer me a 4-5 million dollar horror movie. Our solution and it is a good one is to make as much money on the individual projects as possible and just not go out on hire to other people. We like running around the left end of the film industry ●



**N**ight of the Living Dead is simply a phenomenon. In the fourteen years since it was made it is still playing to large audiences in cinemas all over the world, is a big seller on video and is seen in Halloween II as the movie playing on television on Halloween night.

The director has gone from his beginning with a film that has been called everything from "sick" to "a fluke" to "a major work of art" to be one of the most important in the genre. *Night of the Living Dead* was first conceived in the offices of Latent Image, a Pittsburgh film company owned by George Romero and Russell Striener which specialised in commercials and industrial films. Over lunch one day Romero and John Russo, a writer friend, discussed the possibility of producing a full feature film. They came to the agreement that, if shot in 35 millimetre black and white, it was a viable proposition, and, for commercial reasons, it should be a horror film. Within weeks a separate company, called Image Ten, had been formed for the production of a film that was now in script form as *The Flesh Eaters*. The title was changed to *Night of Anubis*, after the Egyptian God of the Dead, but this was later rejected in favour of *Night of the Living Dead*.

**Feature by Martin Coxhead**





The film's premise, from Romero's original story, is simple. For some reason, possibly the effects of radiation seeping from a crashed space probe, the dead are rising as zombies and attacking the living. Worse, they are cannibals and anyone killed by them returns as a zombie. We first see Barbara and Johnny, a typical young American couple, in a cemetery paying their respects to a dead relative. Johnny thinks the trip is pointless and cosmetic, after all the dead are dead. After a silly practical joke, Johnny is attacked and killed by a lurching man, the first zombie we see, forcing Barbara to drive away in terror. She reaches a small farmhouse and takes refuge. Soon other characters take shelter there also. A pair of teenage lovers, a tall black man who seems the natural leader and a married couple, the wife weak and quiet and the man a brash racist, with their daughter, who was injured in a zombie attack. As the ghouls attack the house the humans barricade themselves in and a siege begins.

Overcoming the drawbacks of low budget, an amateur cast and a soundtrack culled from a tape library, *Night of the Living Dead* is nevertheless a terrifying classic. Certain scenes have the quality to cause shivers years after they have been seen, such as the clutching pairs of hands smashing through

the boarded-up windows or the scene in the cellar when the Cooper's young daughter, who has died from her injuries, rises to attack her mother with a trowel.

The film was shot in thirty days and the schedule was gruelling. "They were back-breaking days," says John Russo, "Twenty-hour days. Some of us slept at the house where we were shooting." The cast was drawn from friends and relatives of the crew, with Russo, Striener and Herman all appearing and many give adequate performances. Most interesting was the casting of a black man in the role of the hero, Ben. Although it is insisted that Duane Jones got the role simply because he was the best man for the part it throws an interesting light onto the sharp dialogue exchanges with the redneck Harry Cooper. Black heroes are something Romero has used in his subsequent films *The Crazies* and *Zombies—Down of The Dead*. For the scenes of the zombies encircling the house the producers thought they would have difficulties in getting the citizens of Pittsburgh to lurch around wearing rags in the cold night air at three in the morning when all the exteriors had to be shot. To their surprise people arrived in droves, as Karl Hardman remembers: "They'd bring sandwiches,

coffee, blankets and wait around for hours while we were setting up the shots. You'd see some of them staggering around, practicing their zombie walk."

The budget didn't run to complicated special effects so compromises had to be made. Make-up relied on Derma wax, an undertaker's material for repairing shattered faces, which dries rock hard. Bosco, a brand of thick chocolate syrup, stood in for expensive cosmetic blood. For the scene when the young lovers, Tom and Judy, crash their truck in an escape attempt a vehicle was simply filled with TNT and detonated, scattering deadly shrapnel all around. The following scene where the zombies pull limbs, chunks of flesh and organs from the burning truck and eat them caused concern. It was one thing to have ordinary people shuffle around in the middle of the night around a farmhouse but how would they take to biting into some of the lorryload of sheep's innards, delivered by one of the stockholders in Image Ten who happened to own a meat market? To everyone's delight, disgust and amazement, the extras attacked the offal with manic relish, making it one of the gruzeliest scenes of cannibalism ever filmed.

Come the end of the film only Ben still lives, having escaped to the safety of the cellar. He ►



hears voices above, one of the 'posses' roaming the countryside killing zombies by shooting them in the head (a piece of voodoo lore and supposedly the only way of killing a zombie, which Romero used and is now a standard zombie movie plot device). Leaving the farmhouse to meet his 'saviours' Ben is shot by one of the sheriff's men. The film's end titles roll over stills of his body being loaded onto a large communal pyre and burnt. The ending highlights the bleakness of the plot. The dead were the living, your friends and family. There is no release in death, you become one of Them. Even Ben, the hero, after surviving a night of terror is killed.

By the living.

Realising that they had a potential winner on their hands, Hardman and Striener set about finding a distributor. Columbia were interested for a while but eventually turned it down. A deal was finally struck with the Walter Reade Organisation, a distributor who had generally handled "art" films and had never dealt with a horror film before.

Reviews were mixed, *Variety* said, "The film casts serious aspersions on the integrity of its makers, distributors Walter Reade, the film industry as a whole," and went on to call

it "Unrelieved sadism" and amateur. Strong words indeed, but then the favourable reviews started coming in. Critics began to find political overtones, statements about the loss of identity, the de-personalisation of Middle-class America. But were the messages there? Director Romero now says yes, the film was always intended as an allegory on an America which had lost Martin Luther King to a sniper's bullet (an interesting Ben parallel) and was now heavily involved in the Vietnam war. Russo adamantly disagrees with this. "I think the film is an attempt to make money. A lot of critics have jumped in off the deep end in likening the ghouls to the silent majority and finding all sorts of implications that none of us ever intended." He also rejects Romero's claim that it was always his intention to make a zombie trilogy over several years. "It was a one-off, that's all."

The film was an instant box-office success when it opened simultaneously in Pittsburgh, New York and Philadelphia and the producers were happy with Reade's handling of the film and waited for the first cheques to arrive. But after a few months the honeymoon with the Walter Reade Organisation was over. Accusations of mismanagement and



withholding of monies began to fly. "We got a lot of bookings, sure," said Striener. "But cinemes were getting it for a week for twenty five bucks, flat. No percentage, nothing."

Image Ten took the matter to court wanting the rights of the film back. Although they received the rights, the matter was tied up in litigation for many years, not made any easier when Welter Reade himself was killed in a skiing accident. "We're not saying that the film investors didn't make any money," said Romero of the case, "Just that they should have made one hell of a lot more." The profits made, although never officially confirmed, are estimated in the region of twenty million dollars. Not bad on an initial investment of \$150,000. The film played for over a year in prestige cinemas in Paris, Rome and Madrid and was dubbed into twenty-five languages.

A box-office and critical success, it was taken into the permanent collection in the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

And of Image Ten? The corporation was dissolved after production and the creative team split up. Duane Jones kept on acting, his only notable appearance being in a black-orientated vampire film called *Ganja and Hess*.

Karl Hardman formed Hardman Associates

in Pittsburgh, a successful company dealing in commercials and industrial films, similar to the Latent Image. Russo and Striener created New American Films, again in Pittsburgh and also making commercials and sales films. Their next feature production, an emotional drama called *The Affair*, was a failure and was quickly shelved.

About 1977 when George Romero announced the shooting of *Dawn of the Dead*, John Russo produced a sequel novel of his own, *Return Of The Living Dead*, and said that a film version was imminent. It still hasn't appeared.

But of all the questions asked about the film the one that most begs an answer is Why? Why did a film with zombies tottering about and chewing limbs, shot in grainy black and white with no "name" stars and had a black man as the hero who is shot dead by white men at the end become the classic that it has today? Perhaps it was just the right film at the right time. The Sixties had been grim for America and the Seventies looked like being bleaker still. The film is a rollercoaster ride into terror but the monsters were not vampires in cloaks or cobbled together monsters in Transylvania. They were the men, women and children of Anyville USA. It

is interesting to think that had the film been made fifteen years earlier in the McCarthy witch-hunt era it would have been interpreted as a parable against Communism.

Perhaps Romero is claiming too much for it or maybe Russo, Hardman and Striener didn't understand Romero's overall intentions but one thing remains clear. What they produced—with little money or resources but with energy and enthusiasm—is one of the all-time classics of horror cinema.

## Night of the Living Dead

(1968).

Duane Jones (*as Ben*), Judith O'Dea (*Barbara*), Karl Hardman (*Harry Cooper*), Marilyn Eastman (*Helen Cooper*), Keith Wayne (*Tom*), John Radey (*Judy*), John Russo (*Johnny*)

Produced by Karl Hardman & Russell Striener, Directed, Photographed and Edited by George Romero. Written by John Russo & George Romero, Special Effects by Regie Survinski & Tony Pantanello, Production Manager George Kosana. Time: 90 Mins Cert: X



# it's only a movie

starring John Brosnan

I was a shattering revelation and I still haven't quite recovered. I was attending last May's Science Fiction Luncheon Club meeting, held at an Italian restaurant in London, and was listening to the guest of honour make his speech when it happened.

Now the guest of honour was none other than that venerable Old Master of sf, A.E. Van Vogt, author of such classic works as *Satan, The Weapon Shops of Isher*, *The War Against the Rull* and *The Voyage of the Space Beagle*. Now as we all know the latter book, which consisted of a number of different stories originally published in *Asounding* magazine in the 1940s, provided the inspiration for *It! The Terror from Beyond Space* and *Alien* though the film companies concerned didn't know it (Fox subsequently had to make an out-of-court cash settlement to Van Vogt as a result of their ignorance) but during his speech Mr Van Vogt revealed that another well-known sf drama was also inspired by the same book...

And that was, believe it or not, *Star Trek*! Now I've been a great admirer of A.E. Van Vogt ever since my early teens and in fact *The War Against the Rull* was one of the first "adult" sf books I can remember reading (a few mean-minded critics would probably claim that Van Vogt has never written anything adult in his life but... so it came as a tremendous shock to me to hear him admit he had been responsible for... arghhhh... *Star Trek*, the tv show that has done for the science fiction genre what Barbara Cartland has done for literature in general).

I reeled back in horror from the table, desperately grabbing for the nearest carafe of cheap red wine (we're a poor lot who attend these sf lunches). Several large gulps later my nerves were steady enough for me to hear Van Vogt confirm the awful truth. Gene Roddenberry had indeed approached him back in the early 1960s and told him that he had an idea for a tv series based partly on the *Beagle* and also on the old British Navy sailing ships complete independence of action when making long voyages and therefore out of contact with their home base (that's why there's all that waffle about the Enterprise being on a "five year mission" in the credits voice-over)...

Not only that but Roddenberry commissioned Van Vogt to write the original tv treatment for *Star Trek*, which he did, though apparently Roddenberry never made use of it...

It was all too much for me. I collapsed, senseless, from my chair and slid under the table where I remained, unnoticed by the other luncheon attendees, until discovered by a cleaner some hours later.

What next, I wonder? Will it be revealed that Isaac Asimov was the secret creator of *Space 1999*? Or that Brian Aldiss was the guilty perpetrator of *Blake's 7*? After the shock of Van Vogt and *Star Trek* nothing would surprise me anymore.

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Readers with longish memories will recall that the letter column of Issue 46 was filled

entirely by a missive from a captain Mark Savage of Melbourne, Australia. The gist of this Antipodean cry from the heart seemed to be that film critics should be reviewing the Rushes instead of the films. By 'rushes' Mr Savage wasn't referring to the dailies but those moments in a film that send the blood rushing to your head or feet or whatever. In his words: "A filmic rush can be interpreted as a cathartic response, but it runs deeper than that. To experience a Rush may be comically called a Cinematic Orgasm—the climax is the cathartic release." Oh, really? That explains the behaviour I often see in cinemas, usually by someone sitting right in front of me. He then went on to say: "This may seem awful postured and self-indulgent [which took the words right out of my mouth] but writing about what the critics have failed to nail will have unexpected results..."

Unexpected? It seems to me that the "Rushes" he describes have already received plenty of attention from critics. For instance, he claimed that not one review of *Star Wars* mentioned the feelings invoked by the shot of the star cruiser roaring overhead in the opening sequence whereas it seems to me that practically every reviewer made a point of it (I know I did in my review—some drive about knowing what a minnow must feel like when an aircraft carrier goes by; not exactly *Sight & Sound* stuff but I did try).

Mr Savage accused me of giving *Blow-Out* a "No verdict with a shade of Yes, rather reluctantly." In actual fact I gave it a Yes shaded with a reluctant No. I didn't think it was De Palma at his best but I did call it the best thriller I'd seen that year (1981). And I also resent Savage's accusation that I made "wisecracks about a film-maker who is

perhaps the finest artist in the cinema today." He went on: "I am not here to put down Brian De Palma as most of you Englishmen seem to do along with David Cronenberg, George Romero and Gary Sherman, all Americans..."

Well for one thing, Mr Savage, I'm no Englishman and secondly, in my review of *Dressed to Kill* in *Starburst* 28 I said: "De Palma proves with this *Rolls Royce* of an exploitation movie that he's probably the finest American director at work today. But even so I hope that the tremendous financial success of *Dressed to Kill*, after the failure of *The Fury* [which I thought was a great movie]... will provide him with the opportunity to move into more original areas..."

And I'm still hoping that. "Rushes" are important and nobody can deny that De Palma is the absolute master at creating them but they are only a part of good cinema.

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I went to see the double bill of *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back* recently, mainly because I wanted to see if my original impression of the latter had altered any in the intervening years.

It hadn't. *Empire* is great until about halfway through (the chase through the asteroid belt has to rate as one of the all-time great model sequences—I'd forgotten how brilliant it is) and then, with the introduction of the dreadful Yoda and all that half-baked mysticism, the film grinds to a halt and never really recovers, even in the cloud city sequences [which are inferior to the ice planet ones].

Sorry *Empire* and Yoda fans. Pick up your clubs at the door and get in line behind the *Star Trek* fans... I'll be out soon.



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# book world

Since its launch in February, 1977 the weekly science fiction comic *2000 A.D.* has established a strong reputation for inventive and enterprising features. Primarily aimed at older children, it has attracted a high proportion of adult readers who respond to the imagination and humour which have become its hallmarks. Its scriptwriters have always made great use of traditional science fictional themes and motifs but have developed them in a distinctive fashion which has given *2000 A.D.* its own special personality. Its closest American counterparts, the superhero comics, tend to be serious, even solemn affairs, whereas *2000 A.D.* has always possessed what might best be described as a streak of cheekiness which manages to lighten even its darkest stories. I'll never forget the inscription on a tombstone in a cemetery for robots which read: "Rust In Peace".

The archetypal *2000 A.D.* hero is Judge Dredd, consistently the most popular character in the comic strip since his first appearance. Dredd is a futuristic lawman who patrols the streets of Mega-City One, a huge metropolis which covers most of the eastern seaboard of the United States. To the west of the city lies the Cursed Earth, the radioactive wasteland left after the last atomic war and inhabited by mutants, aliens and ordinary humans eking out a precarious existence in the hostile environment. Dredd himself is like a 21st century Dirty Harry in uniform, wearing a helmet which he never removes so that the readers are never shown his face. What can be seen is the stern, often grim, cast of his jaw and mouth. Tough and utterly uncompromising in his dealings with criminals, his main slogan is "I am the law".

The lawmen of Mega-City One have considerably more power than the average policeman possesses today, and this has led to accusations that Judge Dredd, and *2000 A.D.* in general, is excessively militaristic and anti-libertarian. There's a degree of justification in this complaint, but it might also be argued that the comic merely mirrors the concerns of its younger readership in a dramatic and colourful way; children and adolescents tend to be fascinated by war and strong, charismatic figures, but very few of them grow up to become bigots or militarists. And within the framework of a given series, the better *2000 A.D.* writers have always striven to inject a degree of compassion and genuine pathos into their stories.

Titan Books have just reprinted the first part of one of the most popular Judge Dredd series, "The Cursed Earth", at £3.50. Scripted by Pat Mills, former editor of the comic and arguably the best writer on its staff, it demonstrates all the qualities which have made the strip so popular. Dredd and a handful of men are sent out into the Cursed Earth to recover an antidote for a plague which threatens Mega-City One. They encounter a village under attack by a horde of wild riding robots, a band of mutants who hate "norms" and have carved their leader's face on Mount Rushmore, robot vampires who are programmed to suck blood from their victims in order to keep the last President of the United States alive, and finally a team of human slave masters who lord it over numerous captive species of aliens. Among these aliens is Tweak, who looks a little like a walaby with crab-like pincers for hands and



who feeds off rocks. Dredd, secretly despising the slave masters, aids Tweak's escape and discovers that the alien's wife and child have been killed by the slave masters. The scene where Dredd and his companions lay stones on the grave in homage to Tweak's dead family has a real poignancy which is all too rare in comics.

*2000 A.D.* could not have succeeded so well on the basis of its scripts alone. The essence of a good comic is the marriage of a strong storyline with evocative art, and the comic has managed to attract numerous artists with vivid and distinctive styles. Most of the strips in this compilation were drawn by Mike McMahon, whose free-flowing technique is especially effective at conveying movement and emotion. The rest of the strips were drawn by Brian Bolland, who is probably the best artist to work on *2000 A.D.* and whose interpretation of Judge Dredd is regarded by

many people as the definitive one. Bolland has a more careful, detailed style than McMahon, and he is a master of shadows and of mood. Dredd never looks more stern and solemn than when drawn by him, and Bolland has since gone on to produce artwork for DC in the United States, a measure of his growing reputation. This compilation, the second of three projected titles, provides an excellent introduction to Judge Dredd for readers unfamiliar with *2000 A.D.*

I'm surprised that no enterprising film company has bought the rights to Judge Dredd; the character seems eminently cinematic to me, especially given the success of the two *Mad Max* movies, which I suspect owe a lot of their inspiration to the strip.

Meanwhile, Penguin have just published the book of the film *Quest for Fire* by J.H. Rosny Aine at £1.25. Well, it's not exactly the book of the film in the sense of being a novelization: it





was actually first published in 1911 and the author has long since shuffled off this mortal coil. I haven't yet seen the movie, but I can tell you that the dialogue is perfectly understandable, being written in English rather than in grunts and gutters & la Anthony Burgess. The book can best be described as a kind of prehistoric ripping yarn, with Noah and his two pels Nem and Gaw setting off to recover the fire which has been pinched from them by another tribe. It's all action and adventure from the word go, with Noah, Nem and Gaw battling it out with various enemies and human tribes before finally winning through in the tradition which must have inspired Edgar Rice Burroughs and a host of other writers. From time to time the novel does have a tendency to read like one of those old schoolboy encyclopaedias which dramatizes scientific knowledge in an effort to make it interesting; but it's a good,

fast read and cheaper than most cinema tickets these days.

Grenada are repackage several Frederick Pohl titles with attractive covers by John Harris. Pohl was originally best known for his collaborations with C.M. Kornbluth in the fifties; his career then went into something of an eclipse following Kornbluth's death until the seventies and solo novels such as *Men Plus* and *Gateway*, the latter being one of my favourite of novels of recent years. *Jem* (Granada, £1.50) was first published in 1979 and concerns the colonization of a planet by three rival groups of humans and the way in which they exploit the three native life-forms of the planet. It's all about economic rivalry and the politics of expediency, and it's the kind of book I would have liked to have admired but didn't. All the human characters are either strong but unsympathetic or sympathetic but weak; an air of cynicism hangs over the whole proceedings from the outset, and the reader never entirely escapes the feeling that the author is manipulating his material for maximum effect. Compared to most of writers, Pohl has a sophisticated approach to the staple materials of the genre, and he is to be commended for trying something new with each novel rather than retreading successful ideas as many other of writers do; but while *Jem* is always interesting and readable, it was ultimately too calculated for my liking.

*The Sword of the Lictor* (Sedgewick & Jackson, £7.95) is the third book in Gene Wolfe's 'The Book of the New Sun' tetralogy. The first two books in this cycle have been received with great critical acclaim in the science fiction world, but I have to concur with my predecessor John Bowles in having some reservations about the series to date. Wolfe is certainly one of the most gifted science fiction writers working today, and the many mysteries of the far future world in which the action of these books takes place are gradually being revealed with succeeding volumes. But the narrative does tend to be rather static at times, and the rumour that Wolfe is presently writing a fifth book in the series suggests that he may have been unable to fulfill all his ambitions in his original scheme. In this volume Severian the exiled Torturer continues his journey of self-discovery, being assigned to a government post in the city of Thrax and having further encounters with characters from previous books.

Thomas M. Disch's latest collection of short stories, *The Men Who Had No Idea* (Gollancz, £7.95) is something of a disappointment to me. I've always been a great fan of Disch's work, but the present collection contains a disproportionate amount of lightweight, even frivolous material. Disch, always an elegant and urbane writer, is a self-conscious artist who in his best work has often used the idea of the artifice of fiction to upset his readers' preconceptions in a stimulating way. But there's always a danger that this kind of cleverness can become smugness, and too many stories in this collection gave me the impression that Disch was writing with his mental tongue in his cheek. Cleverness and intelligence are admirable qualities in any writer; but so are emotional honesty and compassion. Compassion in particular seems singularly lacking in this present clutch of stories.

# TV ZONE



**H**opefully ITV's new channel will be screening a few more classic animation shows. Thanks mostly to the BBC, audiences in recent years have had a chance to catch up on a whole host of Warner Brothers cartoons as even the odd Disney short from time to time. Though the quality of the *Mickey and Donald* programme is disappointing, the colours (video copies no doubt) have washed out appearance and the chopping off of the individual cartoon titles is shameful.

Disney's feature length cartoons of course have not yet been shown on television although one of the recent guides, *Movies on TV*, lists most of the Disney output as been available including *Fantasia* and *Sleeping Beauty*. This is probably due to the planned Disney cablevision channel scheduled for American tv sometime next year.

Other animated series that are due for a

repeat screening include one or two shows from the Hanna-Barbera factory. William Hanna and Joseph Barbera started their own animation company after being made redundant at MGM when the studio decided that it no longer required any more *Tom and Jerry* cartoons. The most successful of the cat and mouse escapades had been drawn under the directorship of Hanna-Barbera between 1940 and 1958, with the production being supervised by Fred Quimby.

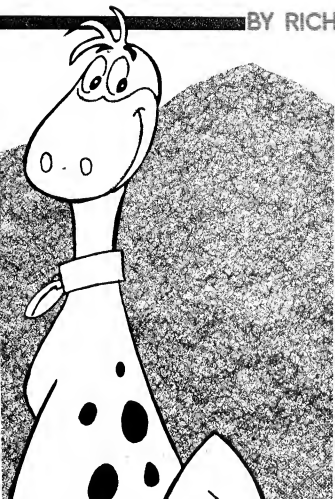
Amongst the better known Hanna-Barbera tv series were *Huckleberry Hound* which was syndicated in 1958, *The Jetsons* 1962-1964 (still being repeated on Saturday morning television as recently as 1979) and the most popular of all *The Flintstones* produced between Sept 30th 1960 and Sept 2nd 1966. Running for six seasons and spanning 166 episodes, this comedy series set in the stone age had an estimated viewing audience of

150 million viewers throughout 45 countries.

The idea for the series was inspired by the prehistoric remains found by scientists in the La Brea tar-pits, a short walk from Hanna-Barbera's main office in Los Angeles. "We eventually decided to combine the lives of the cave families with our own age. Naturally it became a satire of our society." So explained Bill Hanna at the time. The decision was made to put *The Flintstones* and their next door neighbours, the Rubbles, in the city of Bedrock, a county seat of Cobblestone country. Then Bedrock was given all the advantages of urban life—a butcher, baker, newspaper and even a pizze pie maker.

Rumour has it that the characters of Wilma and Fred Flintstone and Barney and Betty Rubble were "Borrowed" from the highly successful situation comedy series *The Honeymooners*, although as far as I can tell, the latter was never shown here on British





television. Fred Flintstone voiced by Alan Reed is a dino operator from the Slate Rock Gravel Company, his pet Barney Rubble, whose voice was supplied by the versatile Mel Blanc worked with him. Other voices included Jean Vander Pyl and Bea Benaderet. Chips Sperm vocalised Dino, Fred's pet dinosaur and John Stephenson spoke for George Slate, Fred's boss.

The series was premiered on ABC television and became the first cartoon series to be screened during prime time, airing on Friday nights at 7.30. After syndication NBC picked up the repeats, showing them between 1967 and 1970. Back into syndication, a recent trip to Los Angeles underlined the fact that it is possible to watch *The Flintstones* on eleven separate occasions within the space of one week. *The Flintstones* received a great deal of fan-mail, some of the letters being addressed to one of the show's

writers Tony Benedict, others going direct to the producers Hanna-Barbera.

One interesting aspect of the series was its continual spoofing of other tv shows and films. When *The Addams Family* and *The Munsters* proved to be a huge success, Fred and Wilma suddenly found themselves with new neighbours aptly named *The Gruesomes*, due to their weird appearance. In fact, the creepy family created quite a legion of fans over the years. Other crazy guest stars in the series included Hollywood personalities Gary Grant and Stoney Curtis whose name speaks for itself. One episode related to Fred and Barney's involvement with *The Bedrock Hillbillies* who were not unlike *The Beverly Hillbillies*. Singer Ann-Margaret dropped up as stone age starlet Ann-Margrock. There was even an animated tribute to the characters of *Bewitched* and episodes with outrageous

titles such as *The Treasure of Sierra Madrock* and *Son of Rockzilla*.

Additions to the regular cast included a baby for Fred and Wilma during the third season, a little girl called Pebbles and for Betty and Barney an adopted son called Bammm Bammm who not only spent the rest of the series protecting Pebbles from harm, but also showing off his incredible strength. One character who constantly cropped up to help Fred and Barney out of difficult situations was a little space man called the Gazoo.

To give some idea how popular *The Flintstones* had become, when a near-fatal car accident put Mel Blanc into hospital the show was taped from his bedroom so as not to hold up the schedule. When a similar misfortune prevented Alan Reed from travelling to the studio, specially prepared scripts were recorded in advance, until he was fit enough to work again.

Although *The Flintstones* was finally shelved in 1966, William Hanna and Joseph Barbera were suddenly aware that the demand for repeat showings of the series were on the increase. This fact encouraged them to tackle one or two spin-offs, including a series entitled *Pebbles and Bammm-Bammm* 1971-1974, which related the teenage adventures of our two heroes. The stories concentrated more on their friends than their parents although Fred and Barney would occasionally put in the odd cameo appearance. It ran for 27 weeks on the CBS network eventually turning up repeated as part of the series *Fred Flintstone and Friends* between 1975-1976.

Unfortunately Alan Reed died in 1977, although the demand for *The Flintstones* continued to grow. In 1979 Hanna-Barbera announced a new series oddly named *Fred and Barney Meet The Thing*. Mel Blanc continued as the voice of Barney and Henry Corden voiced Fred Flintstone. Each one hour episode told how Fred and Barney encounter a teenager with the ability to turn himself into a huge orange creature called *The Thing*. The series ran for one season on the NBC network and was a co-production between Hanna-Barbera and the Marvel Comics Group. Apart from this rather unusual series the studio continued to churn out the occasional *Flintstone Special*, two of which turned up recently on ITV. Lacking the flair of the old shows, they are still a welcome return to a high quality tv animation.

One interesting footnote to the whole *Flintstone* saga was a recent report that Hanna-Barbera Productions were suing Columbia for 35 Million dollars over *The Flintstones*. They claimed that a breach of contract had taken place when Columbia had agreed to sell the US telecast rights to the original 166 episodes for a mere 20 million dollars. Hanna-Barbera felt that the shows real value far exceeded the sale price. The new buyer would own the rights for a seven year period commencing September 1981 with the chance of a further seven year renewal option under the same terms. All that Hanna-Barbera Productions, a subsidiary of the Teft Broadcasting Company are expected to collect from the deal was approximately 7.5 million dollars in profit. The irony is that with a flop-proof sales scheme, the new buyer could acquire over three times the amount that it cost to buy the programmes originally.

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**L**ucio Fulci is best known to Zombie fans for his over-the-top Living Dead *Zombie Flesheaters*, now available on video tape in its uncensored form. The picture is certainly as gruesome—as George Romero at his best. Which is fine if you happen to like that sort of thing.

*Starburst* has obtained permission to reprint two interviews with Lucio Fulci by Robert Schlockoff from the excellent French film magazine *L'Ecran Fantastique*, translated from the French by Frederic Levy.

*Starburst* would like to give special thanks to Alvin and Robert Schlockoff and *L'Ecran Fantastique* for permission to reprint this interview and to Frederic Levy for his time and patience in translating the piece.

*L'Ecran Fantastique:* You are no newcomer in the film industry.

**Lucio Fulci:** I have done films for thirty years and films are all my life. I directed thirty-three movies, but I wrote the scripts for one hundred and thirty. First I studied at the Experimental Film Centre in Rome, with teachers like Antonioni and Visconti. Incidentally, when I took the oral exam to be admitted to the Centre, Visconti asked me what I thought of his film *Ossessione* (1943), which was then regarded as a masterpiece, and, with the unconsciousness of my youth, I pointed out that he had "ripped off" quite a few pictures from Renoir's films! The rest of the jury looked at me as if I was a monster, but Visconti told me: "You are the first person to have told me the truth; you know films and you have a lot of courage—which is what a director needs to have!" And so they took me in!

Then I was assistant-director on Marcel Lherbier's *Last Days at Pompeii*, before I launched out into comedy with Mario Monicelli and Steno (for instance, there was that Christopher Lee film called *Uncle Woe a Vampire*). At that time, I was associated with the writing of scripts rather than with the directing of films. Since then, except for *Zombie 2 Flesheaters*, I have been responsible for the scripts of all my films. Does this mean you prefer writing to directing?

Not really, but my interest in directing is mainly a technical one. To me, the most important parts in the making of a film are script-writing, sound-mixing, and editing. I have a terrible fault: I do not like stars. *Mario Bava did not either.*

Nor did Hitchcock, who would send notes to his actors to give them directives. When Paul Newman once asked him why he behaved that way, Hitch answered: "So I don't have to talk to you!" As a matter of fact, I like working with actors, but not with stars. Bava, since you mentioned his name, had all his films based on technique, special effects, and suspense: so he didn't really need actors. But Bava was ignored (just like Fredo was), and only after his death did critics begin mentioning his genius.

As far as I am concerned, there was one exception—I did work with a star, Toto, the great comedian. I did twenty-two films with him, as a writer or assistant-director, and he helped me direct my first film, *The Thief*, which turned out to be a big flop. At that time, I would do comedies, and rock 'n' roll films. Did you feel any interest in fantastic films yet? I was a great admirer of Tourneur and Corman—I love Corman's Poe series. After a while I was fed up with comedies and would not do any more. So I did not work for a year.

# Lucio fulci





until, with some friends, I produced a western which I feel belongs in the fantastique, **Tepepa**. It was very different from other Italian westerns one could see then: both soft-spoken and extremely violent. The confrontation of two brothers in an unreal climate. Franco Nero, who had not yet been the star of **Django**, played the first part.

I did my first giallo, **Perversion Story**, in 1968. Again, it had something unreal in the way a magic San Francisco was shown. But my first true fantastic film was **Una Lucertola con la Pelle di Donna**, even though it ends like a detective story.

*Why this ending, which betrays the very nature of the film?*

We were confronted with two possibilities. The story was about a woman, Carole, dreaming of a murder, and finding, when she awakes, that the murder has really been committed. On that basis, you could have two endings, one fantastic, the other in the line of a detective story. The producer insisted that the end be a logical one. The film was very

successful in Italy, anyway.

*The film contains a lot of astounding dreams, like the one with bats pouncing at the heroine, or that formidable sequence featuring dogs in a laboratory, with their bellies ripped open...*

Carlo Rambaldi was responsible for special effects in the bat scene, which was not easy to shoot. He built mechanical bats sliding on wires and flapping their wings; he also added superimpositions of bat shadows. I

remember Beve was much impressed when he saw the sequence, though I am sure he would have done it better than me. As for the dogs, Rambaldi used artificial ones, inside which he pieced special bags he could control from behind, giving the impression that the heart and bowels were really moving. Some people believed we had used real dogs, which is totally preposterous, as I love dogs, and we had to face a lawsuit. Fortunately, Rambaldi saved me from a sentence to two years' imprisonment by retrieving one of his synthetic dogs!

*The importance of technique is what strikes*

*the viewer most, in this film, and also in Sette Note in Nero.*

I have always liked to go forward, to try new techniques. And that's what I did with **Long Night of Exorcism**, too. This very peculiar film deals with witchcraft today. In a small village in Southern Italy, children are killed and a 'witch' is accused of these murders by a priest, and is eventually beaten to death with chains by peasants. But the priest finally turns out to be the culprit. When I saw the film it caused a sensation in Italy. I decided to keep on this line and make a totally fantastic film, **Sette Note in Nero**.

It was no easy enterprise. I had had the script ready for a while, but the producers, Luigi and Aurelio Di Laurentis, got in my way for a year: one day they wanted to do a comedy, the morning after a detective story, and so on. I refused; anyway, they had had me lose a complete year, and I couldn't have worked in such conditions.

Then I met producer Fulvio Frizzi—the father of Fabio, my composer—and we hired





the marvelous Jennifer O'Neil. Thanks to his determination and tenacity, I could make the film just as it had been written originally, and the result proved I was right, as the film finds favour with the youth—the audience all my films are meant for. It's a film I like very much, but, to some extent, a difficult film, as it is entirely centred upon a woman in relation with objects undergoing changes in their positions and shapes. The editing was particularly difficult, and we had two continuity girls, given all these sequences where dream mixes up with reality and things past and things to come continually mingle.

By then, I had formed a crew of technicians who did not change afterwards: Dardano Sarchetti, writer; Sergio Salvetti, cinematographer; Fabio Frizzi, composer; etc.

*How did you shoot the scene where a woman falls off a cliff and has her face torn on stones? We used a trick similar to the one we had used for the final sequence of **Long Night of Exorcism** with the priest's death. We had the*

actress lying on a kind of rail. Then we shifted her, on her sliding board, up to the camera and the stone. At the moment when she reaches the stone, her face is replaced by a close-up of a plastic head, which, when touching the stone, blows off without any fire. The whole sequence thus combines general shots of a manikin falling off the cliff, medium shots of the actress on the rail, and close-ups of the plastic doll.

*Was this film, **Sette Note in Nero**, a turning point in your career?*

It was, because it was my first real venture into the fantastic, but commercially it was a flop: for the following two years, I had to do music shows for television! Then I was contacted by producer Fabrizio De Angelis who had liked **Sette Note in Nero** so much he was convinced nobody else but me could do **Zombi 2**. I really enjoyed doing this film, as I had all the crew of my previous films back with me.

*So you did not write **Zombi 2**?*

I did not write the original script, but I

changed it a lot. I wanted to make an entirely fantastic film, a free film, contrary to **Sette Note in Nero**, which was based on a mechanism requiring some celebration. **Zombi 2** is based on sensations, hinges on fear, and, of course, horror. In this connection, I am most satisfied with the achievement of Gianetto de Rossi, previously responsible for make-up effects in Jorge Grau's **Living Dead at the Manchester Morgue**; I am particularly pleased with that "eye scene" which impressed many people. Gianetto de Rossi couldn't participate in the making of **City of the Living Dead**, and was replaced by Franco Ruffini, but he was back on **The Beyond**.

For a fantastic film, you need not only a strong team, but also people who know everything about technique, as it is particularly difficult to do special effects. My associates and myself get along together very well and work in a totally relaxed atmosphere. When we finished shooting **Zombi 2**, I said we had just made a horror film classic, without knowing it, and, to some extent, having fun like a circle of friends. I say that in reaction to those who think a film can't be successful if it is not made under some tension.

*"Having fun"? What do you answer to those who blame you for all the horror in your films?*

Horror is not a goal in itself. I am basically interested in the fantastic. As a matter of fact, there are few horror scenes in **City of the Living Dead**; tension is the important thing in this film. I have given up horror for horror's sake, instead I wanted to make a nightmare film where horror is ubiquitous, even in apparently innocuous forms. Horror only appears in two scenes in a spectacular way, let alone the fact that the drill scene is a warning I wanted to give against a certain type of fascism, the girl's father killing the young guy in such an object way just because the young guy is different, a frightened victim who, like the so-called witch in **Long Night of Exorcism**, does not understand all this hostility towards him. I wanted to show this boy as a dropout whom girls protect because of his kindness, but, unfortunately, I was not able to develop the conservatism of some Durwin inhabitants. **City**, to me, is a visual rendering of the metaphysical side of bad dreams.

I shot the film in Savannah, Georgia, but I changed the town into a nightmare city, so unreal that the audience can't put a name to it. I tried to achieve the same thing with New Orleans in **The Beyond**.

To come back to this question of horror in my films, I'd like to point out that the audience usually applauds once a horror scene is over, not while the horror is on the screen. People are wrong when they accuse my films of gratuitous horror; censorship is wrong about my films being an incentive to violence. Far from participating in this violence, the spectator, on the contrary, is rid of it, freed from horrors he holds within himself, the film being the catalyst for this liberation.

*The audience indeed applauds most the scenes where zombies are burnt out.*

Yes, because the audience is against evil, basically, and I think that the Clint Eastwood films are much more harmful to the youth. My films are only nightmares after which you wake up relieved and relaxed. And fantastic films are liberating, especially for the youth, because of this role of the audience. In **City of the Living Dead**, I paid much more attention to the story than to the zombies, who are only accessories of this story.

*City offers quite a few special effects, like the worm rain, or the inside out vision of the girl's bowels!*





It was not easy: actors would not quite accept all those worms stuck up on their faces—we used thousands of them, over twenty pounds! As for the bowel vomiting sequence, we had to use the tripe of a freshly slashed lamb (for after ten minutes, it dries up and becomes unusable), which the actress actually swallowed, and vomited afterwards. For close-ups where bowels rush out, it was of course a doll containing a pump.

Wasn't *The Black Cat* a new experience for you, given its very Anglo-Saxon look? I made this film as a tribute to Roger Corman, though he only did a sketch out of the original story (in *Tales of Terror*), while I had to do a feature! What interested me in this story was to comment upon the relationship between a man and a cat. The two characters are identical, even though the cat is to win: for the cat may be cruel, but after all he is only the judge, the conscience of this man. The man hates the cat, but, like in the story, he can't kill him, as nobody can kill his own sick soul. We often try to kill off our bad conscience, to no avail.

I was also fascinated with the theme of imprisonment always present in Poe's works. To me, it's the most perturbing of all themes. I had Jennifer O'Neil wailed up alive in *Sette Note in Nero*, and Catriona MacColl buried alive in *City of the Living Dead*. What kind of man is Patrick Magee?

He is a marvellous actor, but shooting with him was extremely exhausting, as he has a lot of personal problems. He didn't actually collaborate much, I even had incredible difficulties with him, but his acting talent is beyond criticism. I think Patrick Magee was the perfect choice for a film I wanted to do as an atmosphere film, not as a horror film.

Mimsy Farmer, on the contrary, is terrific. She is both a very friendly person and a very good actress for this type of film. Producers tried to launch her as the "leading American woman in Italy" a few years ago, but, as films like *The Black Cat* are very rare in Italy, I don't think she has played in any film since then.

Did you conceive *The Beyond* as a sequel to *City of the Living Dead*?

No, my idea was to make an absolute film, with all the horrors of our world. It's a plotless film: a house, people, and dead men coming from *The Beyond*. There's no logic to it, just a succession of images. The Sea of Darkness, for instance, is an absolute world, an immobile world where every horizon is similar. I think each man chooses his own inner hell, corresponding to his hidden vices. So I am not afraid of Hell, since Hell is already in us. Curiously enough, I can't imagine a Paradise exists, though I am a Catholic—but perhaps God has left me?—yet I have often envisaged Hell, since we live in a society where only Hell can be perceived. Finally, I realize that Paradise is indescribable. Imagination is much stronger when it is pressed by the terrors of Hell.

And is there no way to exorcise this Hell of yours?

No way! I often tried to exorcise my personal Hell to no avail, so now I show it in my films. But, mind you, what is to me the most tragic thing in *The House Near the Cemetery* is not the people who die, but that little girl who opens for her young friend the gates to the world of the Dead, and saves him from normality life, from the monster who killed the boy's parents, but also plunges him into the *Beyond*. In fact, those children do not actually die: they just live in another world in which adults have no power. Finally, the most frightening thing is that the house stays there and will receive other visitors.

Being a Catholic, don't you believe in Good and Evil?

This may seem strange, but I am happier than somebody like Bunuel who says he is looking for God. I have found Him in the others' misery, and my torment is greater than Bunuel's. For I have realized that God is a God of suffering. I envy atheists; they don't have all these difficulties.

It is true that all my films are terribly pessimistic. The main characters in *The Beyond*, for instance, become blind, as their sight has no reason d'être any more in this lifeless world. But humour and tragedy always join, anyway. If the emphasis is the tragic side of things, it may have a comical effect. Everything considered, having directed so many comedies when I started my film career turns out to be very useful for my true cinema, the cinema of the Fantastic. Comparisons have been made between *The*

Left: Katherine McCall as she appeared in Lucio Fulci's *The Beyond*. Below: A blind victim of the supernatural machinations in *The Beyond*. Opposite: The superb poster artwork for *Zombie Fleshshooters* (also known as *Zombie 2*).



*House Near the Cemetery* and Dario Argento's *Inferno*.

The themes are different, but I won't deny there are some connections between Argento and myself. Both films, intentionally, have no structure. We tried in Italy to make films based on pure themes, without a plot, and *The Beyond*, like *Inferno*, refuses conventions and traditional structures, while there are some threads in my other films: *The House* is about a monster, *The Ripper* is an Hitchcockian thriller, *City of the Living Dead* deals with Evil, *Zombi 2* with death and the macabre. I like *The Beyond* very much because I think it was an interesting attempt.

People who blame *The Beyond* for its lack of story have not understood that it's a film of images, which must be received without any reflection. They say it is very difficult to interpret such a film, but it is very easy to

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interpret a film with threads: any idiot can understand Molinaro's *La Cage aux Folles*, or even Carpenter's *Escape from New York*, while *The Beyond* or Argento's *Inferno* are absolute films. Some people also said that *The House Near the Cemetery* was a rip-off of *The Amityville Horror*.

This is not true: in *Amityville*, you are confronted with something unknown which terrorizes the tenants, while in *The House Near the Cemetery*, the secret is eventually given away: you know that the monster is a mosaic of corpses. In fact, this film was influenced by Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* and its film version by Jack Clayton, *The Innocents*. That's why you can hear at the end of my film this quotation from James: "Are children monsters, or would monsters be children?", as all that is told may have

complicity between a child and an adult—the cook of the Overlook Hotel. But in *The House Near the Cemetery*, adults are totally unimportant. I couldn't care less about this guy who goes mad in *The Shining*. I hate *The Shining* anyway. Kubrick's coldness was alright for *A Clockwork Orange* or *The Paths to Glory*, because it corresponded to the story. But Kubrick's genius is not made of horror films. *The Shining* has no feeling. Isn't the end of *The House*—when the little girl helps the boy out of the grave—reminiscent of *North by Northwest*? You mean when Cary Grant gets his girlfriend out of the precipice? Yes, it is. I love to make quotations, and there will be many in connection with Huston or Hitchcock in *The Ripper*.

So what is *The Ripper* about?  
It's the story of a mad killer committing

would make him a more fantastic figure. Which of all your films do you prefer?  
*Beatrice Cenci*, which is not a well-known film. I shot it in '69, and it was painful as I had excruciating personal problems then. It's certainly the film I am the most deeply attached to, but there is a curse on it. It was released in very few countries, had a poor reception, and all the prints have vanished. (Note: Wrong! There is now at least a French videocassette of this film, entitled *Liens d'amour et de sang*.) Is there a subject you have dreamed of shooting?  
Yes, I have had a project for years, but I have never been able to get off the ground I want to call it *Roman Black*; it is a study in power. Not a denunciation of power—this has been done so many times... but a thriller à la Chandler, Hammett, or Irish set in Ancient



When the earth  
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# ZOMBIE FLESH EATERS

IAN McCULLOCH · TISA FARROW · RICHARD JOHNSON

happened in fact in the child's imagination—even his parents' death. The spectator may also see the film as a kind of cycle, the events being repetitions of events past.

The fantastic in this film is all centred upon children.

Of course! For instance in that scene where the two children talk together and understand each other though they are hundreds of yards away from each other. Everything is possible, in their world; children don't have the same limitations as grown-ups. That's the reason why, despite all the audience's warnings, the little boy goes down into the cellar to fetch the baby-sitter's head. Children do not have the same hang-ups as adults. Like monsters, they have a different wavelength. So my film borrows from Henry James's works, and not despite an accusation I have received, from *The Shining*. In *The Shining*, there was a

terrible murders in New York, but to some extent it's a fantastic film, if only because the police has to spot this madman among twenty million New Yorkers. Much less horror than in my previous films, no zombies, but a human killer working in the dark. The setting is deliberately conventional, though I aim at making a new style of thriller, I want to pay a tribute to Hitchcock. *The Ripper* is in a way a Hitchcock revisited, a fantastic film with a plot, violence, and sexuality.

Did you shoot all the film in New York?

Yes, for four weeks, and with many difficulties, as we had to confront the unions. It's no easy job sending an Italian crew shooting a small budget film in New York. We had thought of Boston first, because of the famous Strangler, but New York, a town both monstrous and fascinating, finally seemed a better choice. Placing the Ripper in this town

Rome, at the end of the Empire. A new survey of the Fall of the Roman Empire in the form of a thriller. But of course I might have to shoot a totally different film right now. René Clair, once asked what he intended to do after *Le Silence est d'or*, simply answered: "Another film." And for us, film directors, that is the question: to be or not to be able to shoot another film.

Is the cinema the thing that counts most for you?

I ruined my life for it. I have no family, no wife, only daughters. All women left me because I never stop thinking of my job. My only two hobbies are my dogs and my sailing boat. Work is very important to me. John Ford once said: "I know that in bars they are saying bad things about me. But I am shooting films in the mountains with Indians while they are talking..."